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HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

4

A HISTORY
OF
THE ENGLISH CHURCH,

FROM ITS FOUNDATION TO THE REIGN OF QUEEN MARY.

BY
MARY CHARLOTTE STAPLEY.

"O GOD, WE HAVE HEARD WITH OUR EARS, AND OUR FATHERS HAVE DECLARED
UNTO US, THE NOBLE WORKS THAT THOU DIDST IN THEIR DAYS, AND IN THE OLD
TIME BEFORE THEM."

THIRD EDITION REVISED.

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THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED TO

My dear Children,

WITH THE EARNEST PRAYER

THAT THEY MAY BE DAILY "BUILT UP ON

THAT MOST HOLY FAITH" INTO WHICH

THEY HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED;

AND "CONTINUE CHRIST'S FAITHFUL SOLDIERS AND

SERVANTS UNTO THEIR LIVES' END."

HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

With regard to the composition of this little work, I feel deeply its many defects, but my sole aim has been to set forth the plain truth in a form suited to children. In order to make my meaning clearer, I have frequently chosen a short and simple word in preference to a longer but perhaps more suitable one, and so may occasionally have sacrificed the harmony of the sentence for the sake of being better understood.

The early authorities I have chiefly consulted in this first part are Bede's Ecclesiastical History, and William of Malmesbury's English Chronicle, while the living authors to whom I am chiefly indebted are Archdeacon Churton, Dean Hook, Rev. C. Kingsley, and J. H. Parker, Esq., whose valuable little book on Gothic Architecture I have occasionally referred to; also Eccleston's "Introduction to English Antiquities."

I have also made selections from Neander's "Memorials of the Early Christian Life," and Southey's "Book of the Church."

M. C. S.

March, 1865.

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HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

Part II.

CHAPTER I.

THE ANCIENT DRUIDS, THEIR RELIGION AND RULES.

[A.D. 50.] You know, my dear children, you have read in your History of England that many hundred years ago Julius Cæsar, the great Roman general, came over with his soldiers, and conquered the English people, who, you remember, were then called Britons.

They were not at all like what English people are now: they went unclothed, their houses were made of wicker-work like baskets, they had no cattle feeding in the fields, and what was still worse, they had no churches, as we have, in which to worship and to praise God, and no Bible to tell them what God was like, and what He wished them to do.

But as we always find that savage people, when they have nothing to guide them, find out some sort of religion for themselves, and try to get some notion about God, so the Britons had a religion of their own. Their chief teachers and priests of religion were the Druids. These Druids worshipped a god whom they believed to be very great and powerful; but, to judge from the cruel laws they imposed on the people, he must have been a god of vengeance and cruelty, not the loving Father you have been taught to worship. Religious rites were performed, and prayers offered up by the Druids, amidst the gloom of dense oak groves. Here, too, they worshipped the sun, instead of praising God only, who placed it in the heavens to give warmth and brightness to the earth, and can, when He chooses, hide its cheerful beams altogether. Once a year a great number of people assembled, and walked in order to one of the sacred

oaks. It was a very grand occasion, and you may be sure there was a great deal of pomp and show. A Druid in a white dress climbed the tree, and cut a piece of mistletoe with a golden knife; the prayers of the people were then offered up, and two white bulls sacrificed. After this there was much rejoicing and festivity.

It would have been well if the religious rites of these Druids ended with this simple sort of ceremony; but they taught the people that God required something more than their prayers and praises, and instead of teaching them they would please Him best by leading holy lives, and being "kind one to another," they compelled them to give up even their dear little ones as an offering to this god of wrath. How sad those poor parents must have felt when their children were led out to suffer a cruel death—their piteous cries for help drowned by the frantic yells of the people, and the beating of drums. The prisoners they took in war were reserved for a fate quite as terrible; a large wicker image was prepared, into which the victims were thrust; a fire was lighted underneath, and the wretched beings consumed in the flames. By such bloody sacrifices did these poor blinded heathen hope to appease their angry god, and avert the horrors of war. Are you not glad that you have been taught a different religion to this? The Britons lived in such awe of these priests that they would not have dared to disobey them in the smallest matter. If any one was bold enough to keep to his own opinion, he was driven by command of the Druids into the deepest part of the thick wood, and there left a prey to hunger and wild beasts. Still, even in this world, there is nothing so bad but some good may be found in it, if we only take the trouble to search; and as I have told you much that is sad and wicked about the Druids and their religion, I will now try and remember something good.

First of all, the Druids taught the people much that was very useful about medicines, and by finding out the right sort of herbs, they often cured people who were ill, or at all events eased their pain. Then some of the Druids played on harps, and sang all sorts of songs about the courage and bravery of the old Britons; and these bards often encouraged the soldiers to fight very bravely in battle, and defend their country against enemies.

Once a year, when all the corn was cut and the harvest was over, they set apart a day for solemnly thanking God; and all the people joined their praises with the Druids. Even Christian people would do well to imitate the wild Britons in this respect.

Before I end this chapter, and tell you how the Britons came to learn about Jesus Christ, and to worship the true God, I will just mention three very good things the Druids taught them:—

1st. They urged the rulers to provide laws for the good of the nation.

2ndly. They commanded the people to obey the laws.

3rdly. They taught them to bear trouble and pain with fortitude.

CHAPTER II.

HOW OUR LORD AND HIS APOSTLES FOUNDED THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH—
EARLY DIFFICULTIES AND TROUBLES—BISHOPS—SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

BEFORE I tell you how it happened that the Britons were taught to know the true God, and to give up worshipping the sun, and believing all the Druids told them, I must give you a short account of how people in other countries had learnt to worship God, and how it was that a great many believed in Jesus Christ, although the Britons had not yet heard of Him or been taught to love Him; then I think you will better understand what I am going to talk about in this book.

Now, dear children, every time you go to church or say your Catechism, you stand up and repeat the “Creed,” as it is called; you do not pray, or ask God for anything in this Creed, but you merely say, before God and all the people, things which you believe to be true, and which you read in your Bible—for instance, that God made heaven and earth, and that Jesus Christ died and rose again for our sakes. I cannot now tell you the meaning of all the sentences in the Creed; it would take up too much time, and does not belong to our subject; but I am anxious to try and make you understand one of the sentences, because it has a great deal to do with what we are talking about. One of the things you say you believe in is the “Holy Catholic Church.” Now the word “Church” is used to mean two quite different things, and I want you particularly to learn the difference between them.

When we speak of the building where we go to say our prayers and to praise God, we call it the “church;” and when we go there we know we ought to behave quietly, and not whisper or think of play, as we do at home, because the “church” is God’s House. Again, when we talk of people who believe in God and Jesus Christ, and have been baptized into His Name, we call them (that is, the band of believers) a

“Church.” And this is what we mean when we speak of the “Holy Catholic Church” in the Creed. The Epistles you find at the end of your Bible are “Letters” or “Epistles” written to all the Christians or believers in Christ living at that particular city or country, and called a Church.

Thus there was a Church at Corinth, a city of Greece, a Church at Rome, and a Church at Jerusalem—that is, a certain number of people who believed in Christ, and had a bishop or chief clergyman at their head. Now I want, in this book, to give you a short account of the Church in our own dear England, that is, a history of those who believed in and worshipped the true God, from the time that the people knew no religion but that of the Druids till the hour when they were brought to know and worship God much in the same manner as you are taught to know and worship Him now. We shall, I dare say, find a good deal to make us sad, and many things to disappoint us; still I hope we may find something to interest and instruct us as well.

How is it that we in England are not now saying our prayers to the sun, as the Britons did, or worshipping idols of wood and stone, like so many poor heathen we read of in these days? Before I answer this question, I must go back, for a little while, to the time when Jesus Christ went up into heaven, and left those poor eleven men, His Apostles, alone, and as it seemed, without a friend upon earth. How sad, how very sad, they must have felt, as they stood gazing up into heaven, to see their only friend, their only hope, their only comfort, taken far, far out of sight: but it was of no use standing there; they must go, cheered by their Lord’s promise of His continued presence, and obey His last command. And what was that command? “Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” What! eleven poor, weak, ignorant men hope to teach the whole heathen world to believe, as God, a man who had been crucified as a deceiver, and forsake the religion they had been taught from little children to love and honour! Why, you will exclaim, nothing short of a miracle could do this! You are right, God did do something quite out of the common way to help them: Jesus Christ had promised to be with His disciples always, and to send the Holy Spirit to aid them in their very difficult work. These eleven poor, weak men became bold, earnest, and able to preach in a wonderful manner after the Holy Ghost was given them. So great was their success, that in a short time, we are told in the Bible, three thousand Jews became Christians, or believers in Christ, in one

day, and "numbers were added to the Church daily," that is, a great many joined the Apostles, believed in Christ's resurrection, and owned him for their Lord and Saviour. A short time after we read of five thousand more believing.

The wonderful success of these despised followers of Jesus of Nazareth alarmed the Jewish rulers, and roused all their hatred; they tried by threats and persecution to stop the Apostles from preaching Christ; but all in vain, they boldly persevered in speaking the truth.

One man we read of in the Bible was specially zealous and active in searching for and punishing the Christians, and when the first martyr, St. Stephen, was stoned, "stood by, consenting to his death." You remember the wonderful manner in which it pleased God to make Saul, the persecutor, one of the greatest, bravest, and most zealous of His Apostles, and how after he had seen the bright light shine from heaven, and heard the gentle reproach, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" he showed his zeal and love for Christ by spreading His truth in distant lands, and at last by laying down his life for that cause he had once so bitterly persecuted.

You must not forget that the religion taught by the Apostles was then quite new to all the heathen world; the Apostles of our Lord were not, like us, surrounded by numbers who loved God and worshipped Him, but by men who regarded them and their religion with the greatest hatred, because they told the rich and powerful they must give up all the cruel ways they so much loved, forgive their enemies instead of hating them, worship only one God, and forsake the gods they held so sacred. No wonder the Emperors of Rome, heathen as they were, did all they could to put an end to this strange, and, as they thought, hateful religion. You have read of the dreadful way in which the Christians were murdered and tortured, to make them deny Christ; but God was with them, and the more they suffered the more people believed in them, and began to think there must be some truth in a religion which could give such hope and courage in the hour of death. The worst thing a famous heathen governor could find to say against these despised people, when he sent a report of them to the Emperor Trajan, was this, "that they were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God; to take an oath not to do anything wicked, such as thieving and robbing, and never to speak an untruth; when these things were performed it was their custom to part and meet again to eat together, which they did quietly and orderly; *but this they have given up,*" he adds,

“since I gave them your command that you would not allow a great many people to meet together.”

The Apostles spent the whole of their time in going about to different towns and countries, teaching and persuading the people to believe in the true God, and wherever a certain number believed, there a Christian Church was founded. While the Apostles lived, they were chief over all the other clergymen, and when anything had to be settled or put in order, they were called on to give their advice, and decide the matter. Before they died, they chose out other good men, many of whom they had known as friends, and made them in their stead bishops or chiefs over the different Churches. Thus there was a Bishop of Rome, of Jerusalem, of Antioch, &c.

You may be sure wherever the Apostles went, and Churches were founded, Christianity spread; but I fear this has been rather a long chapter, so I will tell you, in the next, how in dear old England a Christian Church was founded, and the people learnt to worship the true God.

CHAPTER III.

DESTRUCTION OF THE DRUIDS—FIRST PLANTING OF CHRISTIANITY IN BRITAIN
—PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH—ST. ALBAN.

[A.D. 50—303.] JULIUS CÆSAR landed with his soldiers on the shores of Britain fifty-five years before Jesus Christ was born, but you must not suppose he found it an easy matter to conquer the country. So many bloody battles were fought, and the Romans lost so many men and ships, that they were several times on the point of giving up all hope of subduing these brave, hardy savages. Though the Romans had plenty of weapons to fight with, and armour to protect their bodies, more than one hundred years passed before they really conquered this little island. The poor naked Britons were fighting for all they held most dear—their freedom, their country, and their religion; and this it was that made them fight, as Julius Cæsar said, “more like devils than men.”

As I have already told you, the Britons were guided in everything by the Druids, and as the Romans found they were always urging on the people by their wild war-songs to defend their *religion and their country*, they determined if possible to *destroy all the Druids and their sacred groves*. I dare say *the poor Britons thought that all must be over when they saw*

their priests murdered, and the religion they had been taught to reverence and love destroyed; but you will see by-and-by that God made them wiser and happier than they had ever been before, while the heathen Romans, unknown to themselves, were by these cruel acts preparing the way for a far higher, nobler, and holier faith, a faith which would give these poor savages patience and comfort under trouble, and open to them the gates of a glorious life of peace and happiness beyond the grave.

I wish I could really tell you who that holy and brave man was who first ventured to teach a religion so utterly opposed to that of the Druids and Romans; but it is now so many years ago, and there are such a number of different opinions on the subject, that it is no very easy matter to decide which seems most likely to be the true one. Some suppose that Joseph of Arimathea (that brave man who, when it was almost death to profess a belief in the crucified Saviour, came and begged His lifeless body of Pilate, and "laid it in his own new tomb") was the first to tell the heathen Britons of a living Christ. Then, again, we are told that St. Paul (who we know travelled far and wide, and endured every kind of hardship, in his holy work of teaching the true God) visited Britain; at all events, after his first imprisonment at Rome, which we read of in the last chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, he lived eight or ten years, and spent those years entirely in preaching to the heathen. One of his chief friends, Clement, who was afterwards Bishop of Rome, speaks of St. Paul going to the "far west," and if you will turn over your Bible and read the twenty-eighth verse of the fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, you will see that St. Paul speaks of his intention of visiting Spain, and then he would most likely have crossed over to Britain at the same time. Be this as it may, we know that at the time the Romans had quite conquered Britain, a vast number of heathens had become Christians in other countries, and doubtless there were many fighting like brave men in England under the Roman generals. Think how grieved they must have felt when they saw the poor Britons saying their prayers to the sun, and thinking to please God and the Druids by offering their children in sacrifice, and how anxious they must have felt to teach these poor conquered savages what they had found so full of comfort and hope themselves. Let there be but the "will," God gives to every one, even to ignorant people and little children, the power to do something for Him; and I cannot help thinking that these Christian soldiers, few and despised though they may have been, were the means, under God, of founding the

Church in Britain, and spreading light and hope through the darkened land.

[A.D. 200.] There is every reason to believe that a hundred years after the Apostles were dead many churches had been built in Britain where the true God received praise and worship. It is interesting to know that the Claudia mentioned by St. Paul in the the twenty-first verse of the fourth chapter of the second Epistle to Timothy is supposed by some writers to have been a British lady of great beauty and wit, the Christian wife of Pudens, a soldier in the Roman army. Her brother is supposed to have been that same Cyllen, or Linus, mentioned by St. Paul in the same passage, and afterwards first Bishop of the Church of Rome.

There is also a story told (for the truth of which I cannot vouch), that in the year 173 Lucius, a British king, and grandson of this Linus, wrote to Eleutherus, then Bishop of Rome, to send some clergymen to teach his people. At all events we may believe what Tertullian, the great Christian writer, says about the year 200. He speaks of those parts of Britain "not yet conquered by the Romans, being yet subject to Christ;" so you see where the Roman arms could not penetrate, God's truth had made its way in.

In my second chapter I told you how much the heathen Emperors of Rome hated the Christians and their religion. A great many of them did all they could to find out the Christians, and when they refused to offer sacrifice, and worship the heathen gods, they put them to cruel deaths, hoping by this means to get rid of them altogether; but God, who so often brings good out of evil, caused many more to believe in the religion of these poor tortured, dying men, and the more the Emperors forbade it, the more the people persisted in saying their prayers to Christ.

In the year 298 the Roman Emperor Diocletian published an edict that all Christians who refused to worship idols should be put to death, and their churches burnt to the ground. Many of the best and holiest Christians gave up their lives rather than deny Christ; but it is generally supposed that not many in our country suffered in this last dreadful "persecution," as it is called. Do you remember the sentence in that fine old hymn, the *Te Deum*, you hear chanted so often in church, "The noble army of martyrs praise Thee?" Perhaps you may not know that these brave men and women, who died rather than give up their faith, are called "martyrs;" and, as many of them *expired with God's praises on their lips*, so even now they join *with us on earth, and with the angels, praising Him in heaven.*

You will often read sad stories of these good martyrs; and although we may hope never in these days to suffer as they did, we may learn some very useful lessons from their courage and patience. I must not conclude this chapter without mentioning St. Alban. He is generally supposed to have been the first English martyr. He left his own country to fight for the Emperor Diocletian in the Roman army, and on his return to Britain, struck with the contrast between his own cruel religion and the patience and holiness of those who had become Christians, he secretly believed in the truth. We are told, however, that he was publicly brought to confess his belief by the holy example of a poor Christian priest he had sheltered under his roof. When the house was searched, Alban nobly exchanged clothes with the priest, in order that he might escape his enemies. This kind act led to his discovery; and when dragged away to the torture he boldly declared before all the army that he believed in Christ, and would worship only one God. His fate was sealed, and the Saviour he refused to deny on earth prepared for him a home of joy and happiness in heaven. There is a place in Hertfordshire named after this our first Christian martyr, and a fine old abbey, which has lately been restored, was afterwards built to his memory. You must think of him if ever you see it, and wonder if that is indeed the spot where St. Alban suffered nearly sixteen hundred years ago.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW THE CHRISTIAN FAITH TRIUMPHED UNDER CONSTANTINE—USE OF BISHOPS
—PLAN OF THE BRITISH CHURCH.

[A.D. 306.] You will find, dear children, in reading history, that one of the most useful lessons we may learn is that God watches over and orders every event, and when things seem most dark, and evil appears all but to overpower what is good, He raises up some great or holy man to do the work He has in hand, and protect what is true. The spot is still shown at York where the Empress Helena, a British lady, is supposed to have given birth to the first Christian Emperor of Rome. The walls of the prætorium at York rang with shouts of joy when Constantine the Great was proclaimed Emperor of the world. As Englishmen we cannot but feel proud that our country should have given birth to so famous a man. When the *Christian's last spark of hope* seemed about to be put out, and

the heathen religion to prevail, God raised up Constantine to cherish the spark, until it became a great and living flame. During the reign of the wicked Emperor Diocletian, Constantius, the father of Constantine, together with his son, was appointed governor of our island; and this will in a great measure help us to understand why the Britons suffered comparatively little in the persecution. In the year 306 Constantine enters Rome in triumph as Emperor, and all cruelties against the followers of Christ cease. Christians are favoured, and their religion encouraged throughout the world. Our own little island shares in the general joy; churches spring up everywhere, and numbers join a religion which is favoured and upheld by the greatest sovereign of the world. A great Christian writer of the time thus describes the general joy. After speaking of the virtues and goodness of Constantine, he adds: "The Christians now no longer feared those who had so cruelly used them; they celebrated splendid and festive days with joy and hilarity; all things were filled with light, and all who before were sunk in sorrow looked at each other with smiling, cheerful faces. With choirs and hymns in the cities and villages they praised God, the universal King, and extolled the pious Emperor. There was perfect forgetfulness of former evil, and all past wickedness was buried in oblivion. There was nothing but enjoyment of present blessings, and hope of those yet to come. Edicts were published and issued by the victorious Emperor full of clemency, and laws were made full of charity and true religion." *

On looking back at the rules which were laid down for the British Church, it is interesting to find that in many important respects it is very like our own English Church of the present day. First of all, there were the bishops at its head. Of this fact we are certain, because in the year 314 three British bishops were present at a large meeting of different foreign bishops held at the town of Arles, in France. These meetings, which are generally called "Councils," did good in many ways. First, they gave the bishops an opportunity of talking over matters together, and consulting as to what was best for the good of their people; and then they helped one another by proposing new and useful plans, which some might not have thought of. It may have happened, too, that while they were separated at their different homes, they disagreed about various things, and felt aggrieved and angry with other bishops, who could not *think* as they did; but when they came to meet together and *talk over the matter* calmly, they often found that, after all,

* Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, p. 419.

there was not so much difference in their ideas, and they would agree to decide the point amicably by each giving way a little. Again, there were often matters of religion which people could not agree about, and as this difference of opinion sometimes caused a great deal of quarrelling and ill-feeling among Christians, many were glad when the bishops met together and decided the point, which they often tried to do fairly, and for the benefit of all parties; indeed the chief object of these early Councils was to preserve the true faith from being corrupted, and to give the bishops an opportunity of protesting against any false or unscriptural doctrine. But like many other things, good in themselves, these meetings became very much abused in after ages; laws were made which would fain have compelled the people to believe a great deal more than the first Christians taught, or God has told us in the Bible, and which therefore could not promote their welfare.

Now that we are talking about the British bishops, I must just explain what duties they had to perform, and in what way they were a benefit to the Church. Suppose that at this time England was at war with some foreign country, and the Queen wanted to send out a large army of soldiers to fight the enemy, think for a moment what kind of men would be required to make the army complete. First of all would come the soldiers of the line, brave fellows, ready to fight for their sovereign and country; then come the officers, whose duty it is to superintend their different regiments, and last of all, and most necessary of all, the commanding "officer," or "general," who decides all matters of importance, and to whom the whole army look for guidance and advice in the hour of danger. Imagine the hopeless state of confusion the army would be in without such a chief at its head. Probably just when all depended on every one acting together, and being of the same mind, each officer would be trying to carry his own point, and the enemy would have but little difficulty in conquering a foe so divided amongst themselves.

Bishops in God's Church are like commanding officers; they hold together and watch over the members of Christ's Church committed to them; and although there have been bad, tyrannical bishops, as well as unworthy generals, it would be wrong in either case to say they were not needed because some failed to do their duty.

I told you, in my second chapter, that before the Apostles died, they ordained bishops to supply their places. Besides ruling the Christians committed to their charge, the bishops appointed, as they do now, a certain number of earnest men to assist them in teaching and preaching to the people. At the

time of which I am speaking, many of the clergymen so ordained lived a good many together in large houses, called monasteries, and as they were almost the only people who could read and write, they established schools in these houses, where children were taught all that was good and useful; and in times of war or famine the poor distressed people could always find a refuge within these friendly walls.

Some of the clergy married, and lived in different villages about the country, where they taught their people from the parish church.* The British bishops and clergy were very anxious that those over whom they were placed should know and understand the Scriptures; the clergy were well instructed in the sacred volume, written copies of which in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin were freely circulated in the monasteries, and several of the prayers we use now were offered up by the British Christians in their churches.

CHAPTER V.

HOW THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND BECAME CHRISTIANS—STORY OF ST. PATRICK—FALSE TEACHING OF PELAGIUS—THE FRENCH BISHOPS CONVINCED THE PEOPLE OF THE TRUTH—INVASION OF THE SAXONS, AND DISTRESS OF THE BRITONS.

[A.D. 373—426.] If you look at the Map of Europe, you will see on the West of England the island you have so often read of, called Ireland, and you remember when we speak of England, Scotland, and Ireland, all together, we call it Great Britain and Ireland.

Now that I have told you how the Christian Church was planted in Britain, I will try and relate how the heathen people of Ireland, and afterwards of Scotland, came to know and worship the true God.

Through the wild forests and over the shaggy mountains of Ireland wandered a friendless, solitary captive. Taken from his happy home in North Britain at the age of sixteen, the youth Succat had no companions but his herd of swine, and the fierce savages who surrounded him. But you know, dear children, God sends us trouble and sorrow that we may learn our duty, and trust entirely to His guidance; and you will see in the case of Succat how He brought good out of all this seeming evil and injustice. Like many others, Succat, before his trouble came upon him, had set a very light value on God's blessings. What

* Bede, Ecclesiastical History, p. 16.

would he not now have given to have been back again in his happy home, listening to the Christian advice of his good mother, whose words he seemed to heed so little at the time! Often must this kind mother's heart have been saddened by the reckless disregard her thoughtless boy showed for her wise counsel, and the little effect her good example and loving words seemed to have on him. But God tells us that if we "cast our bread upon the waters, we shall find it after many days;" and although years may pass before the seed sown seems likely to spring up and bear fruit, still those words of truth remain: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." In his forlorn state Succat remembered his Christian mother's teaching, and turned to the God he had so long neglected for help and comfort. Years passed away, and Succat was rescued from his captivity, but the scenes he had witnessed among the rude heathen of Ireland were never forgotten; his heart burned with a noble longing to spread among them that blessed religion which had given him comfort and hope when all other comforts had failed, and before long he again appeared on the scene of his former trials, now to be the scene of his triumph. Succat knew the language of these wild Irish, and when he had collected numbers together in the fields by beating a drum, he told them in their own tongue the wonderful history of the Son of God, and urged them with words full of eloquence to turn from worshipping idols, and embrace the faith of Christ. This obscure Scotch youth was the famous St. Patrick, founder of the Irish Church. His labours were crowned with signal success, and during the forty years he preached to the people, numbers believed in God, and forsook their old form of heathen worship. St. Patrick founded a great many schools, churches, and monasteries in Ireland, and spent the last few years of his long and active life in meditating on the love and goodness of God. Though he endured every hardship, and succeeded in doing so much good for others, St. Patrick's humility was remarkable; his only desire seems to have been, that God should have all the glory of the work. After speaking in one of his letters of the wonders God had allowed him to perform among the heathen, he adds: "Yet I conjure all persons, let no one on account of these or similar things believe that I place myself on a level with the Apostles or any of the perfected saints, for I am a poor sinful despicable man."* This good Christian died at a great age about the year 493.

In the meantime I must tell you how the British Church

* Neander's Memorials of the Early Christian Life, p. 430.

began to suffer from troubles, both within and without. Morgan, or Pelagius, as he is generally called, was a native of Wales, where many of the old Druids and their followers had taken refuge. So great a hold had the old religion of the Druids on the people, that it was a long time before they could be persuaded to give up all the customs they had held so dear; and many of the old Druid notions seem with some to have been sadly mixed up with the new and purer faith. Morgan was a clever man, and had in his youth travelled a great deal in other countries, and talked with some of the best and wisest men of the time, but much that he taught was contrary to the Christian faith, and could not be proved by the Bible. We are certainly not told there, as Pelagius tried to make the people believe, that we do not want God's help to make us act rightly, but that there is enough good in ourselves to save us from going to hell. We know that although many have a great longing and wish to do right, as I daresay this Morgan had, yet without God's help we are very weak, and when others tempt us to do a wrong thing, we should find great difficulty in refusing unless we asked God to give us strength, and put good thoughts into our hearts just at the right time. The British bishops and many other good men were very sorry to find that numbers of people liked what Morgan taught, and felt a sort of pride in the idea of being able to save themselves without God's help; so they wisely determined to invite over two very good and clever French bishops to preach to the people, and to show them that they were in the wrong; then after both sides of the question had been fairly discussed, the people could decide in their own minds which seemed the truth, and thus avoid professing what they did not believe. These good French bishops, Germain and Lupus, were received with great respect by the British Christians, and numbers flocked to hear them in the open fields; they preached so earnestly, and proved all they said so well from the Bible, that even the false teachers themselves could not help owning they had been in the wrong; and when the bishops condemned the new ideas, their decision was received with a shout of joy. Now that the true doctrine had been preached to the people, probably many, who before had been wavering and unsettled in their minds, became firmly convinced of the truth, and embraced it with all their hearts. So you see God brought good out of all this trouble.

A time of great trial was now at hand for Britain. The people had lately been much annoyed by the attacks of the Picts and Scots from the North. Up to this time the Romans had sent brave generals over, and these wild invaders had been driven

back. Now, however, the Britons were soon to lose their protectors altogether, that they might, through sad experience, learn the lesson that "it is better to trust in God than to put any confidence in man." Surrounded by enemies at home, the Romans were forced to withdraw nearly all their soldiers from Britain, and as a great many of the best and bravest of the British youths were in the Roman army, the country was deprived of them at the same time.

It was the custom with the Romans to take away all weapons of war from the people they had conquered, so the poor Britons were exposed, in their helpless state, to all the horrors of an unequal war with fierce barbarians. The Romans made one last effort to help them by rebuilding a strong wall built by the Emperor Severus in the north, to protect the country from the Picts and Scots; but in the year 426 the Romans were obliged to retire altogether, and then the northern barbarians broke down the wall and continued their bloody inroads. At the same time the fierce Saxons and Angles from Germany landed on different parts of the coast and committed all sorts of cruelties.

I feel very sorry to have to close this chapter so sadly; but you will I hope see as we go on, that God caused all this evil to work together for the final good of His people.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW ST. GERMAIN HELPED THE BRITONS—ANCIENT BRITISH MONASTERIES—THEIR USE—LETTER OF A BRITISH BISHOP—STORY OF ST. COLUMBA—CONVERSION OF THE SCOTS.

[A.D. 426 to 548.] I MUST now tell you a little more about that good man St. Germain, who had not forgotten the Britons; and as they had been so willing to listen to him before in the matter of Morgan, he determined to visit them in their distress, and give them the benefit of his help and counsel. There is a story told of him which shows that he was a brave as well as a good man. A number of Britons had assembled in the North, hoping to drive away the Picts and Scots, who were about to attack them. Germain hastened to the spot to help them by his encouragement and advice; he formed a clever plan by which the barbarians were surrounded and completely defeated. This battle has sometimes been called the "Hallelujah" victory, from the shouts raised by the Christian soldiers as the enemy fled. It took place at Easter.

Now that the Romans had left Britain, a great many of the good schools they had built became during this time of distress deserted. St. Germain persuaded the clergy and people (many of whom had taken refuge in the mountainous parts of Wales and Cornwall) to build some more large monasteries to take the place of the Roman schools, and afford a refuge for the poor when the country was overrun by invaders. You must remember that in those days people had no printed books, as we have now, to read in; and although I told you copies of the Bible were to be found in most of the British monasteries, you must bear in mind that these copies were not printed in letters on paper like our Bibles now, but every word had to be copied out with a pen. Imagine the labour of such a work as this! Take up your Bible and try merely to count the verses, and then you will be able to form some notion of the patience required to write out every word of the sacred book. The clergy who lived in the monasteries were called "monks." A certain number of these monks were employed in taking copies of the Scripture; each had a separate cell, a small room, allotted to him; and perfect silence was enjoined, that all mistakes might be avoided. St. Germain wisely saw that in these times of trouble and confusion the only chance of preserving true learning and keeping alive the Holy Scriptures was to provide a safe refuge for these good and clever men, where they could perform their difficult task unmolested.

Most bravely and nobly was the work fulfilled;—when ruin, misery, and ignorance reigned all around, there rose the solitary monastery, where the young were taught a noble faith, the poor fed, the friendless and aged sheltered, the wretched consoled. It was God alone who raised those monasteries and sent forth those monks on their holy errand.

In these days of books and wisdom some are led to look with contempt on these Christian men, and scoff at and ridicule what they call their ignorance and superstition; but will it not do us more good to dwell on their love, their patience, and their boldness? remembering that God at this period, as well as in all other ages, raised up just the right sort of people, at the right time, to do the work He had in hand; and though we may think different sort of men could have done the work better, God judged otherwise, and we dare not question His wisdom. Surely, deep is the debt of gratitude we owe these noble men, who in the midst of violence, oppression, persecution, and hardship, handed down to us, through ages of darkness and error, that "Word which giveth light and understanding to the simple." Truly they "sowed in tears what we have reaped in joy."

Many are the stories told of the way in which the fierce invader was arrested in his course of plunder and murder, and compelled in spite of himself to bow before the superior wisdom and holiness of these Christian men. That you may understand what I mean I will just relate a story of the good and brave St. Germain, although it has nothing to do with the history of our own country. A savage heathen chief attacked the part of France where St. Germain lived. The cruel warrior, with his fierce eyes glaring vengeance, and his beard and hair floating in the wind, must have been a sight to strike terror into the bravest heart, followed, too, as he was, by a band of armed savages, who spread death and desolation wherever they went. But Germain had no fear of death; he rushed forward, and seizing the warrior-king's prancing horse by the bridle, commanded him, in the name of the God he served, to desist from his cruel purpose and spare the helpless people. The barbarian, awed and astounded by this Christian man's boldness, retreated, and the country was saved. Lupus, who I told you was the friend and companion of Germain, seems to have so completely gained the respect of the fierce conqueror Attila, that he is said to have asked Lupus to pray for him.

I think it will interest you if I quote a few words from a writer of this age, which will show you the respect with which these good men were regarded. "The bishop converts many to God by a holy life and by holy preaching; he does nothing in a haughty manner, but always acts with humility. By the striving of holy love he places himself on an equality with those who are subject to him. By his conduct and preaching he seeks not his own glory, but the glory of Christ; all the honour shown him he refers back to God; he consoles the dejected; he feeds the poor; he gives to those who are in despair the hope of the forgiveness of sins; he urges on those who are doing right; he spreads light among those who are wandering. Such a man is a minister of the Word, he understands God's voice, and is for others an oracle of the Holy Spirit."* O that bishops in after ages had acted up to this holy pattern!

But to return to St. Germain. He founded a great many monasteries in Britain, and there is a place in Cornwall named after him, "St. Germain's."

As I think you should know a little what the British bishops and priests † taught, I will give you a passage from the writings

* Julianus. See Neander's Memorials of Early Christian Life, p. 345.

† "Priest" is only another name for presbyter or elder, and is given to those clergymen who come next in order to the bishop. You often find it used in your Prayer-book.

of a good bishop of the time; and you will see that they not only led their people to believe in Christ, but that they also taught them to love and serve God by leading holy lives. The passage I have chosen is taken from a letter written by this bishop to a widowed lady, and is full of sensible Christian advice. After saying that it is vain to expect God to have mercy on us unless we try and do His will, he adds, "Let no man deceive his brother. Except a man is righteous he hath not life. Except he keep the commandments of Christ he hath no part with Him. A Christian is one who shows mercy to all; who is provoked by no wrong; who suffers not the poor to be oppressed; who relieves the wretched; succours the needy; who mourns with mourners and feels the pain of another as his own; who is moved to tears by the sight of another's tears; whose house is opened to all; whose table is spread for the poor; whose good deeds all men know; whose wrongful dealing no man feels; who serves God day and night, and ever meditates upon His precepts; who is made poor to the world that he may be rich towards God; who is content to be inglorious among men, that he may appear glorious before God and His angels; who has no deceit in his heart; whose soul is simple and undefiled, and his conscience faithful and pure; whose whole mind rests on God; whose whole hope is fixed on Christ."*

Surely you will say this good man has read his Bible, and profited by it too; advice like this is as well suited to us as it was to the ancient British Christians.

In a former chapter I promised to tell you how the heathen people of Scotland were many of them brought to believe in God, and how in these troublous times He raised up good men to prevent the flame of truth from dying out. I hope you have not forgotten what I told you about Succat or St. Patrick, and how he converted the Irish, and established monasteries all over the island. In one of these monasteries lived a holy man named Columba. He had heard the history of its pious founder, and admired the earnestness of the poor Scotch youth; he had often heard, too, of the heathen state of St. Patrick's native land, and longed to show his gratitude to that good man, for all the benefits, he had received from him by preaching the truth in Scotland, in the same way as Patrick had done in Ireland nearly two hundred years before.

Columba must have been a brave man to have started with only a few companions in a little frail boat made of osiers and skins, and to have landed on a shore where he could only have

* Fastidius, Bishop of London. See Clurton's History of the Early English Church, p. 16.

expected to meet enemies. Columba and his companions landed on the little island of Iona, which was then a refuge for the last of the Druids. The difficulties and dangers that surrounded them were great, but they were by no means daunted by them; and not long after their arrival this small island of Iona became the centre from which the light of truth shone in the darkness around.

Columba seems to have had the power of drawing the wild Scots to him in a remarkable manner. His countenance was fine and open, and his voice so clear and powerful, that when he chanted the Psalms in the open air, the words and melody could be heard a long way off. But apart from his teaching, Columba's holy life and noble example led numbers to believe in the truth of which he preached, and he and his monks were everywhere received with respect. The good man's chief delight was the study of the Bible, and he never read it without praying to God to help him to understand and obey its precepts. That you may form some idea of his tender gentleness of disposition, I will relate a touching little incident which occurred just before his death, and which shows that he thought it not beneath his notice to gain the affections of dumb animals, as well as those of men and women. When Columba became old and infirm he was one day walking with a friend near the monastery, and just as he had sat down to rest by the road-side, an old white horse, which was used by the monks to carry milk to the monastery, came up to Columba, and quietly rested his nose on the abbot's breast. He had not forgotten the kind friend who had so often fed and caressed him. Columba's companion was about to drive the grateful animal away, but the Abbot forbade him, saying, "Let him alone, for he loves me; God hath planted affection even in beasts." This good man's last words to his monks breathe the same loving Christian spirit. "My last request, dear children," he said, "is that you live in perfect peace and charity with one another; if you do this, as the saints have done before you, God, the Comforter of the good, will surely bless you."

I cannot do better than conclude this chapter with one of Columba's charitable and wise sayings, and one which he always put into practice: "When any one has offended *me* I forgive him; when any one offends *God* I pray for him."

CHAPTER VII.

INVASION OF THE SAXONS—THEIR RELIGION—GREGORY THE GREAT—HOW HE DETERMINED TO TEACH CHRISTIANITY TO THE HEATHEN SAXONS.

[A.D. 500—596.] At the end of the fifth chapter I told you that while the fierce Picts and Scots attacked the Britons in the north, the piratical Saxons landed on different parts of the coast, and committed dreadful ravages. In an evil hour, as it then seemed to our country, the poor harassed Britons invited over these Saxons to help them against their other enemies; and, attracted by the pleasant appearance of the island, in spite of its fogs and mist, the Saxons resolved to give up their roving habits, and settle in a country which they found could be so easily conquered.

You have already read in your History of England how these hardy Saxons drove those Britons who survived into the wilds of Cornwall and Wales, and how they finally settled in England, and divided the country into seven different provinces, each governed by its king. When I tell you these Saxons were heathen, and hated all who did not worship their false gods, you can form some notion of the state of the British Church at this period. The Saxons attacked the religion as well as the property of the people. They destroyed the churches and the clergy wherever they found them, and deprived the unfortunate Britons of all comfort, so far as the outward ordinances of religion were concerned. Their gods were all gods of war and carnage, so they thought they could best please these gods by ravaging and destroying wherever they came. Is it not curious that our days of the week are all named after these Saxon war-gods? "Sunday," the Sun's day; "Monday," the Moon's day; "Tuesday," Tiow's day; "Wednesday," Woden's day, and so on.

The Saxons seem to have had a dim notion of a God who ruled over the earth; but, like the God of the old Druids, they imagined Him to be a cruel, vengeful deity, loving bloodshed and human sacrifices. Surely, you will exclaim, the British Christians must have thought that God intended to forsake them altogether. He permitted the heathen invaders to destroy the churches and murder the clergy, and it seemed to be His will that the light of Christianity should be utterly put out. But as we proceed we shall find that God willed it far otherwise, and that out of this mass of misery and evil it pleased Him to raise a glorious Church.

One of the most interesting lessons we may learn from the

study of the history of Christianity is, that God has never once deserted His faithful people, nor allowed their enemies wholly to prevail. Seasons there have been, and must still be, of thick darkness and bitter despair; but the light of truth never has, and never will be entirely extinguished. Often the sun shines behind a cloud, and for a time is hidden from our view; but when we least expect it the bright sunbeam bursts forth, and we feel God's sun has been with us all the time, although its cheerful warmth was withheld from us for a space.

When God withdraws our blessings, then it is we feel the real value of them. In this time of trouble and distress, the poor British Christians longed in vain for those religious helps God had once so bountifully bestowed upon them; and deeply did they feel their need of them, now that they were removed. Although we do not read of any instances of the Saxons being brought to know the true God by the influence and teaching of the Britons, the conquerors were probably softened and subdued by contact with the natives who remained their slaves; and I feel sure that the way was partly opened for those good men who by-and-by landed on the shores of England to teach the wild Saxons a purer religion than that of Woden and Thor. We are told that the two British Bishops of London and York were the last to flee from their people before the warlike Saxons. They settled in the West of England, and for a long time the Christian faith flourished there in comparative safety.

As I before told you, there is nothing in this world so bad but that some good may be found in it; and the Saxons, though heathen, had some noble ideas, and some very wise laws too. It is a curious fact that our word "God" is derived from them, and signifies "the Good;" so although, as I before said, they thought God took pleasure in cruelty and war, they yet must have had some notion of His love of justice also, for they punished wickedness and immorality, and seem to have treated their women with respect and kindness. Indeed they expressed their surprise that the Romans could go so often to theatres and other places of amusement, and leave their wives and children at home.* Then the Saxons were honest, brave, and sober, and firm even to obstinacy; and when these qualities became softened by contact with the lighter and less solid character of the Briton, the result was good for the nation at large. If the Saxons had not subdued the Britons, and settled among them, making in time one nation, our religion might not have been so pure, or our characters so well balanced. So you see even out of all this trouble God brought good to our country.

* *Eccleston's English Antiquities.*

Though the Saxons were heathen, and had but a dim notion of the true God, still I doubt whether the Romans, with all their refinement, would have been so ready to believe in Christ as we shall see these hardy Norsemen were. Be that as it may, the time had come for God's offer of mercy, and we shall see how that offer was received.

We must now leave England for a short space of time, and turn our eyes to the ancient city of Rome. That noble empire was fast falling into decay. Vast hordes of barbarians from the North swept over the sunny plains and rocky mountains of Italy, carrying death and destruction wherever they came. In the midst of this scene of wreck and confusion God's Church still survived and inspired the sinking hearts of the conquered people with hope and comfort. There was a good priest at Rome named Gregory, who, by his piety, earnestness, and devotion, had gained the love and respect of all the people. His wise counsel had several times saved his city in the hour of difficulty and distress, and he was held in such high esteem that all public matters were referred to him; and at the age of forty, wearied out by his heavy duties and many anxieties, he retired to a monastery he had founded, hoping in this quiet retreat to fulfil the wish of his heart, and give the remaining years of his life to the study of the Scriptures, and meditation upon God. But the God he served willed it otherwise. The people of Rome, finding that in these perilous times they could but ill spare their wise governor, went in a body to Gregory, and begged him to accept the office of bishop of their city, as his grandfather Felix had done before him.

You may be certain that Gregory would much rather have lived and died in his quiet retreat, but he was an unselfish man, and cared far more for the public good than for his own ease and comfort; so he listened favourably to their request, and was consecrated Bishop of Rome about the year 560. If we really have a desire and longing to do good to others, God will be sure to give us the opportunity. Had Gregory been a selfish man, and preferred his own ease to a life of active usefulness, I am sure he would have been a far less happy and contented man; and you will see how God made him a blessing to others as well as to himself.

I shall now tell you how much we, as Englishmen, owe to this good and wise man. Before Gregory became bishop, he was one day walking in the market-place at Rome, and cast his eye of pity upon some poor youths who were there exposed for sale,—for the buying and selling of captives was one of the evils which war and oppression had introduced,—Gregory, who had long

been accustomed to the black hair and dark eyes of his countrymen, gazed with admiration on the large blue eyes, long flaxen hair, and fair complexions of these boys: "From whence come these poor youths?" he asked. When told they were natives of our island, and that the people were heathen, he exclaimed: "Alas! that such bright noble faces should be under the power of the prince of darkness." When further told they were called "Angles" (from the Angles and Saxons who had conquered Britain), he added: "They were surely *angels* in face, and ought to share with the angels the joys of heaven." These were no mere empty words of Gregory's. It is easy to talk, but do we always act? As soon as he became Bishop of Rome, Gregory's whole heart was thrown into the work he had so long hoped to be able to accomplish, and we shall see how God helped him to find a good man able and willing to assist him in carrying true religion to the benighted Saxons. If I make this chapter longer, I fear you will forget what I have tried to teach you in it. So I will reserve for another what I have to say about the conversion of the Saxons.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW AUGUSTINE LANDED IN KENT—HOW HE SUCCEEDED IN CONVERTING
ETHELBERT THE KING, AND A GREAT MANY OF HIS SUBJECTS—GREGORY'S
WISE ADVICE—CHARACTER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

[A.D. 596—597.] GREGORY chose a monk named Augustine for the work he had in hand, and sent him with forty other good men to carry God's truth to the shores of England. He had himself started on the mission, but urged by his people to return, he once more set aside his own wishes for their good, and went back again to Rome. On their way to England, Augustine and his monks stopped for a time in France, and they there heard such dismal accounts of the ferocity and obstinacy of the Saxons, that they returned to Gregory, hoping he would allow them to give up what seemed to them so hopeless an enterprise. But Gregory remained firm, and bidding them "God-speed," once more dismissed them on their undertaking. Augustine and his little band of followers landed on the shores of Kent in the year 596.

If you have followed me carefully up to this point in our history, you will remember that God had partly prepared the way for Augustine by having already caused the Britons to

believe in Him: and although the ancient British Church was almost destroyed, still we must not imagine that the true faith of the Britons had been of no use at all to the Saxons, as some in these days would fain make us believe.

Although we owe a deep debt of gratitude both to Gregory and Augustine, still we must bear in mind that doubtless the example of the conquered people, as well as other things, proved a great assistance to Augustine in spreading the truth.

The Saxons had now been masters of Britain for 150 years, and I have already told you that the country had been divided into seven different kingdoms. It so happened that Ethelbert, the King of Kent, that part of England where Augustine had landed, had married a Christian princess named Bertha, daughter of a French king. Up to this time she had been unable to persuade her husband to worship the God she served, but had so far succeeded by her gentleness and amiability in inclining the king towards Christianity, that he was disposed to protect rather than to destroy it. Ethelbert had gone so far as to allow his Queen to rebuild an old Roman church near the town of Canterbury, where the priest Luidhard, who had accompanied Bertha to England, regularly performed the service. So that when Augustine presented himself before Ethelbert, the King expressed his willingness to listen to what he had to say. Augustine and his monks walked in solemn procession to the place of meeting, chanting the Litany as they went. To judge from the account given by an old Saxon writer,* Augustine's sermon must have been full of truth and eloquence. Following the example of the apostles, he dwelt with fervour on the love and mercy of Christ to sinners, and how by His death on the cross He opened the gates of heaven to all that believe on and love Him. The King appears to have been much impressed, and exclaimed, "These are surely fair words and good promises that you have brought, but, forasmuch as they are new and unknown, we may not yet agree to forsake the ways which we with all the Angles have so long holden; but as ye come from a foreign land, and wish to make known to us the things ye believe to be good and true, we will not distress you. We will rather give you friendly entertainment, and supply you with what you want, neither do we forbid you to convert by your preaching whomsoever you may." Kind, charitable, words these, to fall from heathen lips; well may they put to shame many a Christian in after ages! The King offered Augustine and his monks a house at Canterbury, where they might preach the truth to any who were willing to listen, while

* Bede, Ecclesiastical History, p. 36.

Queen Bertha gladly gave them the use of her church for their religious services.

From all accounts Ethelbert seems to have been a very reasonable sort of man; he refused to embrace Christianity at once, because he had had but little opportunity of judging whether it was really much better than his own religion for the people; but when he found Augustine and his companions tried to act up to what they preached, by leading holy lives, he became convinced of its superiority over his own rude faith, and believed with all his heart.

In those times, when none but the clergy and learned men could read, and very few people were able to judge for themselves, the example and wishes of the sovereign had great weight. Though we cannot but rejoice at the account of ten thousand persons being baptized after the King's example, we dare not believe that they were all equally as sincere as their sovereign. But let us hope that although some may afterwards have returned to their old religion, those who remained firm to the new faith really believed from their hearts, and not merely because Ethelbert wished it.

By the advice of Gregory, Augustine was now consecrated first Archbishop of the English Church at Canterbury; and after all his labour and signal success, I think he well deserved the honour. At the same time Gregory gave him some very sound advice with respect to his behaviour towards the converted Saxons, and the old British bishops and clergy, who you remember had taken refuge in Wales and Cornwall, and founded churches there. Gregory had preserved a good many of the fine old prayers used in the Christian Church from the very earliest times; these he placed together in a book, that they might be used the more conveniently when wanted. It is interesting to remember that a great many of these very prayers find a place in our own Prayer-book at the present day, and have been used in our churches by thousands of devout worshippers, ever since the time Augustine knelt and offered them up in the old cathedral at Canterbury.

Though Gregory showed his wisdom in this respect, he was far too charitable a man to compel every one to act entirely on his system. On the contrary, he told Augustine not to keep too strictly to one rule, but to suit the service as far as possible to the different characters among whom he might be thrown, and to collect all he could that was good from the different churches. "Choose," he says, "from every Church whatever is pious, religious, and well-ordered, and when you have made a bundle of good rules, leave them for your best legacy to the

English." It would have been well had Augustine followed Gregory's advice, and given up a few of his own opinions for the sake of peace.

In reading about good men, I think, as a general rule, we shall find it more pleasing and more useful to dwell chiefly on their noble qualities, and try to imitate them. Still, for the sake of truth, we are bound to open our eyes to their faults, and may be we shall learn something useful here as well; always remembering that as we cannot live the life they did or place ourselves just in their position, we are bound, in common honesty, to deal very tenderly and charitably with their failings.

You will have already seen in Augustine's character lofty piety, holy earnestness, and strong energy; but we shall see that his piety degenerated at times to superstition, his earnestness to hot temper, and his energy to self-will. Pride was Augustine's besetting sin; but then had he not a great deal more to encourage pride and haughtiness than many of us have?

Perhaps even the good and charitable Gregory was too prone to believe in wonders and miracles; still even this was better than denying altogether God's overruling providence, as many do in these days. Had we lived in Gregory's time, and been surrounded by fierce heathen enemies, and yet still survived in the midst of blood and desolation, we might have imagined we saw angels in bodily form, standing near to guard us. In my next chapter I shall tell you how the British bishops felt towards Augustine, and in what way they received him.

CHAPTER IX.

MEETING OF AUGUSTINE WITH THE BRITISH BISHOPS—HIS PROUD BEHAVIOUR AND DEFEAT—GREGORY MAKES AUGUSTINE FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—CHARACTER OF GREGORY—HIS PIETY AND WISDOM.

[A.D. 597—601.] AFTER all I have said about Gregory's gentleness and wisdom, you will not be surprised that Augustine should have felt great love and respect for such a patron; and it was quite natural that he should have been anxious to make others feel as he did, and acknowledge the great and lasting benefit Gregory had conferred on England; but I do not think Augustine went quite the right way to gain his end. Zeal, carried too far, often makes men rash and inconsiderate; and although I feel sure Gregory would have approved of much that Augustine

did, his gentleness must have been offended at the manner in which it was done.

Augustine had all his lifetime been accustomed to the way in which the service was performed at Rome; and he was now, for the sake of unity, most anxious that the British bishops should agree to use the same prayers and follow the same rules as Gregory had ordered at Rome. That matters might be amicably arranged, the British bishops and many of their cleverest men agreed to meet Augustine at a place on the banks of the river Severn, and talk the matter over. There is a story told,* that on their way to the place of meeting they stopped, and consulted a wise hermit, famed for his piety, in what manner they should behave. "If," said he, "Augustine is a man of God, believe and follow what he advises." "But how shall we find this out?" inquired the Britons. "Remember the words of our Lord," said the hermit, "'Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.' If," continued he, "Augustine is meek and lowly, believe that he is a true follower of Christ; but if he is ungentle and high-minded, it shows that he is no true follower of the Lord." "But how shall we find to which he inclines?" asked a bishop. "Let him and his company come first to the place of meeting, and when he is seated, then draw near yourselves: if he pays you respect by rising, then believe he is God's servant, and do as he commands; but if he remain seated, ye have the greater number on your side, so reject his advice." As there is a considerable degree of hot temper displayed in the hermit's last words, we may, I think, conclude that there were faults on both sides. Perhaps if each party had arrived at the meeting in a truly Christian frame of mind, determined to bear and forbear, the result might have been very different.

On their arriving on the spot, Augustine remained seated, and, as you may suppose, the British bishops were in no mood to accept his three propositions, however good they may have been. "If," they exclaimed, "he treats us thus haughtily now, what have we to expect, if we submit ourselves, and allow him to be our Primate?"

First, Augustine wished them to keep Easter Sunday on the same day as the Romans did, urging that the greater part of the Christian world, as well as the Church of Rome, observed it on this particular day; and, as he justly said, it seemed a pity their religious rejoicings should not all be celebrated at the same time. It may have been a pity, but it is more a matter of regret that Augustine should have tried to compel the British bishops

* Bede, p. 70.

to give up their old custom, and conform in a matter that was comparatively of so little moment.

Secondly, Augustine made a great point of their adopting exactly the same mode of baptizing as Gregory had ordered at Rome, although that wise man had justly said, "While the faith of the Church is one, there is no harm in a little difference of custom." Augustine either forgot or disregarded this good maxim.

His last request, which was far more reasonable, was unfortunately rejected with the rest. It was that the Britons should join with him and his monks in preaching God's Word to the Saxons.

The bishops refused to listen to Augustine's advice, and to own him as their archbishop, and Dunod, the Abbot of Bangor, concluded the unfortunate meeting with the following memorable words: "We are bound to serve the Church of God and the Bishop of Rome, and every godly Christian, so far as helping them in offices of love and charity; this service we are ready to pay, but more than this I do not know to be due to him or any other. We have a Primate of our own, who is to oversee us under God, and to keep us in the way of spiritual life." Poor Augustine! he had longed fervently for union and peace, yet he turned from that stormy meeting sick at heart with disappointment, but, let us hope, a wiser and a better man.

As I have before said, Augustine was a proud man. Had he thought less of himself and been more humble-minded, one cannot help hoping that the British Bishops would have been far more willing to listen to his proposals, which really had a good deal of sense and reason in them; and as he possessed superior ability and many sterling qualities, I have but little doubt he would in time have gained that respect which he now so arrogantly demanded. You see, dear children, that one bad fault may hide and spoil all our other good qualities, and how careful we should be to try and find out what our besetting sin is, and endeavour by God's help to overcome it, that our holy deeds may not be hindered, and their good effects lost to others.

In the year 601, Gregory (to whom Augustine sent a faithful report of all that had taken place since his landing) sent over three good men to help in the work; one of whom was Paulinus, who afterwards became first Archbishop of York. They brought with them some valuable manuscripts, or written books,—among others a copy of the Bible in two volumes, the Psalms as they were then sung in the churches, and a book of the lives of the apostles and martyrs. Gregory now formally appointed Augus-

tine Archbishop of Canterbury, that is, head bishop over all the other bishops and clergy of England; and you must try and remember that he was the first Archbishop of Canterbury ever consecrated.

I must not forget to mention that one great benefit the Saxons derived from Christianity was a collection of very good and wise laws, put forth by King Ethelbert, and written by some clever men in their own language. These were the first written laws the English ever had, and were afterwards placed by good King Alfred with other laws he made for his people.

As Gregory is so closely connected with the history of Christianity in our own country, I think I cannot do better than close this chapter with a short extract or two from his works. Gregory was a man of deep and sincere piety. He was famous for his charity towards the poor, and his hatred of the slave trade; he also encouraged education, and greatly improved the style of Church music. Some of the finest old chants we sing in our churches now are founded on those composed by him. But Gregory's chief delight was the study of God's Word, and both by his example and advice he tried to make others set a like value on it. In a letter to one of the Emperor's physicians he reproves him for neglecting to read some portions of the Bible daily. The physician had excused himself by saying that he could find no time for this duty. "What else are the Holy Scriptures," writes Gregory, "but a letter from the Almighty God to His creatures? Truly, if you were staying at a distance from the Court, and received a letter from the earthly Emperor, you would not rest, you could not sleep, till you knew its contents. The King of Heaven, the Lord of men and of angels, has sent you His letter, giving you directions how to gain eternal life, and yet you neglect to read this letter carefully. Bestir yourself, therefore, and reflect daily on the words of your Creator; learn to know the heart of God from the words of God, in order that you may long after Him, and your soul may glow with more intense desire after heavenly joys." And in another place he says: "Often we believe that we do something that is very praiseworthy, but when we return to the Word of God, we see at how great a distance we stand from perfection." And that you may believe what I have said about the gentle and charitable nature of Gregory's Christianity, read the following words addressed to a bishop of the time: "We must seek to lead those who are far from Christianity by gentleness and mildness, by preaching, and conversation in the faith, in order that those who cannot be drawn to the faith by the gentle power of preaching may not be repelled by threatenings and terror." How would the loving

heart of this truly Christian man have been pained, could he have foreseen how little in after ages the bishops of Rome, that sat in his place, followed the Christian spirit breathed in these noble words.

CHAPTER X.

GREGORY'S HUMILITY—HOW THE BISHOPS OF ROME IN AFTER AGES BEGAN TO CLAIM UNDUE POWER—ORIGIN OF THE TITLE "POPE"—HOW THE POPES TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE IGNORANCE OF THE PEOPLE TO TEACH DOCTRINES CONTRARY TO THE BIBLE—DEATH OF AUGUSTINE—HOW PAULINUS BECAME FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF YORK—HIS WISDOM WITH REGARD TO THE CONVERSION OF THE HEATHEN KING EDWIN.

[A.D. 601—625.] I AM sure you will have seen from what I have told you about Gregory, that his only desire with regard to the people of England, was that they should be brought to love God, and serve Him in the best possible way ; and although he sent Augustine good rules for managing the Church he had founded, and gladly gave him the benefit of his advice, he had no idea of ruling the bishops and people like a king, nor did he expect them to regard him as their head and adviser : on the contrary, I think you will agree with me that he had shown himself humble throughout, and, you remember, had cautioned Augustine against pride and love of power. I fear we shall soon find other bishops of Rome acting in a very different spirit.

Before I proceed with this history, I must give you a short account of the way in which they afterwards began to interfere in matters with which they had no business. I hope you have not forgotten what I told you, in my second chapter, about the wisdom of the Apostles in choosing good men to govern the different Churches they had founded. These bishops were only allowed control over their own people ; they had nothing whatever to do with Christians in other places, nor had they the slightest power over other bishops. In the early Church they all held the same rank, and had the same sort of duties to perform ; and although some, by their superior talents and holiness, gained respect from other bishops, and were often specially consulted at the councils, we never hear of their claiming power and authority to make laws for other churches. Disregarding this wise and ancient arrangement, the bishops of Rome afterwards tried to persuade the people that they were greater and of more importance than all the other bishops, and so styled themselves alone, and required others to call them "Popes," a word which means "Father in God," and which in the early Church was

sometimes given to those bishops who by their peculiar wisdom and holiness had gained the respect of the Church. When you get older, and can read larger histories, you will be able to learn much that is interesting about the first great council held at Nicæa, under the Emperor Constantine. No less than 318 bishops assembled there from all parts of Europe, to decide a matter of great importance. Many of these bishops had suffered sad tortures and hardships rather than give up their belief in Christ, and some were greatly beloved for their holiness and wisdom. The Bishop of Rome alone was absent on account of his great age; but as the matter does not seem in any way to have been referred to him to decide, we cannot suppose that he claimed any special power or authority. It is a curious fact, too, that the Bishop of Alexandria was styled "Pope" at this council; and as the Church of Alexandria was much esteemed, the bishops seem to have been honoured with this title, although they never thought of claiming it for themselves.

You have already read of the great power and wealth of the emperors of Rome, and how Rome itself was for a long time the chief centre of learning and wisdom. When this great empire was destroyed, people still flocked to Rome to learn foreign languages and useful arts; and we can well understand how the bishops, taking the place of the old emperors, presumed on the ignorance of the people, and compelled them not only to respect, but in time to honour and obey them, even before the bishops of their own country. Now all this was quite contrary to the meek spirit which Christ recommends in the Bible. Several times, you remember, He reproved His disciples for disputing as to who should be chief among them, telling them that "he who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven must humble himself as a little child;"* and in another place He exclaims, "Be not ye called Rabbi (or Master), for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."† We do not find that the Apostles ever forgot their Lord's warning, but after His ascension they all worked together as equals in preaching His Word. This fact the popes afterwards tried to ignore, and, contrary to what we are told in the Bible, they wished to make people believe that St. Peter (who they declared was the first bishop of Rome) was chief over all the other Apostles, and that, therefore, they who sat in his place were entitled to rank, as he did, above all the other bishops.

Although the common people in those days could not read and find out for themselves what was really right, it was a long time before the bishops of Rome actually made them believe

* Matt. xviii. 4.

† Ibid. xxii. 8.

what they said, and submit; but by slow degrees, by little and little, they gained their point, and when once they persuaded people to own them as the popes or head fathers of the whole Church, their power became unbounded, and the rules they made, however contrary to the Bible and the teaching of the early Church, were to be received and held sacred. English people have always loved liberty and wise laws, and have a strong sense of what is true and just; so you may imagine they did not submit very easily to the power of these foreign bishops. The same spirit which made the Abbot Dunod refuse even to listen to Gregory's advice animated many of the kings and clergy who came after him.

The English Church, it is true, fell for a time under the dominion of the pope of Rome; but you will hear by-and-by how at the Reformation she recovered her freedom.

Now when you have seen the wonderful way in which God has kept alive His true religion in England, I am sure you will feel thankful that he has saved our own dear country from the darkness and ignorance into which so many other nations have fallen. But it remains for us to bear in mind this one useful lesson: the more God gives us the more He will require from us, and while we have churches to go to, the Bible to read, and good people to teach us, He will expect us to profit by all these helps, and serve Him by leading holy lives.

Let us, then, beware of judging others, who have fewer opportunities given them; but be it our part to endeavour to discover our own faults, and set a high value on the blessings and privileges God has bestowed on us.

Augustine died in 604, after appointing Lawrence to fill his place as Archbishop of Canterbury. I shall not attempt to take you step by step through the stormy period of our history at which we have now arrived, but shall rather select from a mass of cruelty and wickedness, those characters which shine like bright lights in the darkness, and of which any age may justly be proud. Most of the Saxon kings were as yet ignorant of the true God, and as they still held to the cruel religion of Woden and Thor, they spent their time chiefly in carrying war and bloodshed into their neighbours' provinces; but wherever Christianity made its way, there love and forbearance were almost sure to follow. Nearly one hundred and fifty years passed before England became a Christian country. We shall find that the conversion of the whole of the British Isles, except Cornwall, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, was chiefly owing to the labours of Augustine and his followers; although we must remember that many of the British Christians forgot the former quarrel

with Augustine, and, as we shall see by-and-by, joined with the Roman Christians in spreading the good news of Christianity among the Saxons.

I shall now tell you a little more about Paulinus, who, you remember, was one of the three good men Gregory sent over to help Augustine. Some time after Ethelbert's death, his daughter, who was a Christian, consented to become the wife of Edwin (the king of that part of England called Northumbria), on condition that the King, who was a heathen, would allow her to worship the true God. Edwin consented, and further promised that "if his wise councillors found her religion to be more pleasing to God than his own" he would himself adopt it, and receive her bishops or priests. Paulinus went with the Princess Ethelburga as her chaplain, or private priest, and was afterwards consecrated first Archbishop of York, by Justus, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Now Paulinus was an earnest and a wise man; he did not, like Augustine, allow his zeal for God's truth to get the better of his judgment, but wisely waited until he found a fit opportunity for teaching what he believed to be true. In the meantime he did his best to induce the Queen's friends and servants to lead holy lives, and forgive any who had offended them, in order that the heathen King and his subjects might be able to judge for themselves as to the merits of the true religion. But, as I have told you a good deal in this chapter I wish you particularly to remember, I will keep for my next what I have to say further about Edwin and Paulinus.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW EDWIN CONSENTED TO LISTEN TO PAULINUS—MEETING OF THE NOBLES AND PRIESTS—CONVERSION OF THE KING AND HIS PEOPLE TO CHRISTIANITY—EDWIN'S BAPTISM AT YORK—PAULINUS'S CONTINUED SUCCESS—HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE—DEATH AND CHARACTER OF EDWIN.

[A.D. 625—633.] A CIRCUMSTANCE happened which greatly assisted the good Bishop in gaining his point. You will see that God did not leave him to work alone, but helped him by opening a door for the truth to enter.

One day, as Edwin was sitting at table, a messenger came from the King of Wessex, pretending he had something of importance to say. While Edwin was listening to him, he suddenly drew a dagger, aimed at the King, and would have

killed him on the spot had not a faithful attendant thrown himself in front of the assassin, and received the dagger in his own heart. A desperate struggle ensued, in which another of the attendants lost his life; but at length the murderer was overpowered, and Edwin was saved. The very same night the Queen gave birth to a daughter, and while the King thanked his false gods for her deliverance and his own, Paulinus offered up his praises to the true God, and ventured to tell the King it was the Almighty alone, and not his false gods, who had preserved him and his queen in the hour of danger. Edwin listened with patience, and was so far moved by the words of Paulinus, that he promised that if he could succeed in conquering the false King of Wessex, he would give up his idolatry and worship the true God. He also allowed Paulinus to baptize his little daughter; and at the same time eleven of the King's household were baptized with her. This was indeed a bright ray of hope for Paulinus; and we shall see how, in time, through his energy and wisdom, the King and his subjects declared themselves Christians.

Edwin's attack on the King of Wessex proved successful, and on his return from the victory he never again offered sacrifice to idols; but, like Ethelbert, he wavered, and considered a long time before he consented to be baptized. Many were the conversations he had with the good Bishop, and often, we are told by a writer of the time, "did he retire alone to think on the awful subject." Boniface, who was then Pope of Rome, was told by Paulinus the history of Edwin, and the present state of his mind. The Pope, full of anxiety for his conversion, wrote letters both to the King and Queen, urging Edwin to give up his false gods and to "worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." With these letters he sent some presents as proofs of his good-will; for the King, a soldier's shirt-of-proof, or hawberk, ornamented with gold, and a camp-cloak of fine cloth; and for the Queen an ivory comb, set in gold, and a mirror of polished silver. Still Edwin could not yet make up his mind to own his belief in the true God, until one day Paulinus boldly entered his presence, and reminding him of the events of his former life, when God had saved him from his enemies, exclaimed, "By God's grace thou hast escaped thine enemies, and through His bounty thou art now in possession of the kingdom thou didst long for; remember now the promise thou didst make God, that He who hath raised thee to a short-lived earthly kingdom, and put down thy earthly foes, may deliver thee from eternal misery, and give thee a part of His eternal kingdom in Heaven." Struck by the earnest manner

and fervent words of this good man, Edwin hastened to call together his lords and wise people, that they might give their opinion on the new faith. Bede, a famous writer of the time, gives us an interesting account of this meeting. First, the chief heathen priest speaks: "It is your part," said he to the King, "to find out what this new doctrine is; but I, for my part, will needs speak as I think. The faith we have all hitherto held is good for nothing. Among all thy people there is none who has given himself more diligently to the worship of the gods than I, and yet many have received greater benefits and prospered more than I have. If these gods had been worth anything they would have helped one who has so faithfully served them. If, therefore, after due examination, thou hast perceived that these new things of which we have been told are better, let us at once hasten to adopt them." Then one of the nobles rose, and spoke words well worthy of one who had been brought up as a Christian: "O King, man's present life in this world when compared with another that is unknown, is just like a sparrow flying through the hall in winter time, when you, your chiefs, and servants are seated at supper, the hearth blazing in the centre, the meats smoking and hot, while all without is storm, hail, and snow. The bird flies through, coming in at one door, and going out at the other; the little minute he is within he does not feel the cold air, but after that he returns again to winter, as from winter he came, and is seen no more. Such is the life of man; and of what follows it, or of what has gone before, we are quite ignorant: therefore if this new religion should tell us anything more certain, it well deserves to be followed." The rest of the nobles seemed to agree with these words; but that they might understand more fully the new faith, they asked Paulinus to explain it to them. We may be sure his sermon was plain and earnest, for when he had ended, Coife, the high-priest, who had first spoken, proposed that they should at once give proof of their conversion by destroying the heathen temples; and he who had before honoured these temples and worshipped in them was the first to set the example. Coife, mounted on the King's own war-horse, and armed with a spear and sword, rushed to the sacred spot. We can well imagine the astonishment of the heathen natives, when, contrary to all their laws, they beheld their chief priest mounted and armed; but still greater was their surprise when Coife hurled his spear at the wall of the temple, and urged his followers on to burn and destroy it.*

* There is a village in Yorkshire built on what is supposed to have been the very spot where this sacred temple stood. It is called "Godmundham,"

King Edwin was baptized at York on Easter Day in the year 627, in a small church built of wood. If ever you happen to visit York, you must not forget, when you see the fine old minster or cathedral that has taken the place of this simple little church, to think of King Edwin, and the good and wise Archbishop Paulinus. Now that Edwin had proved the truth of the new religion, and seen how much better and happier it made men than the old faith did, he was most anxious that others should be brought to worship God, and know Him as well; so he moved his court from place to place in order that Paulinus, who went everywhere with him, should preach to different villages all over his kingdom. This plan answered so well, that numbers flocked to listen to the Archbishop, and Bede tells us that for thirty-six days he was fully employed from morning till evening baptizing the people he had converted to the true faith.

It may interest you to read the description given by Bede of this remarkable man's appearance, particularly as it was given to him by an abbot whose friend had been baptized by the Archbishop himself. "Paulinus," he says, "was tall of stature, a little stooping, his hair black, his face thin, his nose slender and aquiline, but his whole aspect venerable and majestic."*

The good King Edwin not only tried to bring over his own subjects to the truth, but was the means of converting a neighbouring king; besides which he is said to have built several churches. Now that you see how sincere Edwin was in his belief, and how much he tried to act up to what Paulinus taught, you will, I know, agree with me that the first Archbishop of York behaved very wisely in giving the King time to consider before he decided on becoming a Christian; for you know, dear children, a mere outward profession of faith is worth nothing. We must believe from our hearts, or we can never expect to act rightly. That you may see the difference between the cruel religion of the Saxons and the gentle, peaceable nature of the Christian faith, I will just quote a few words from a famous writer of olden times: "At that time," he says, "there was no public robber, no domestic thief, the plunderer of other men's goods was far distant; surely a state of things redounding to the praise of King Edwin, and worthy, too, of praise in our day: indeed such was the increase of his power that justice and peace willingly met and kissed each other."†

and the meaning of this name will remind you, if ever you go there, of the wild Saxon priest and his zeal in destroying idolatry—"The home protected by the gods."

* Bede, p. 100.

† William of Malmesbury, p. 45.

Edwin fell in battle, fighting like a brave man, in the year 633. The same writer thus speaks with admiration of his prudence and sincerity : “ He was inferior to none in prudence, for he would not embrace even the Christian faith till he had examined it most carefully ; but when once adopted, he thought nothing was worthy to be compared with it.”

CHAPTER XII.

DEATH OF PAULINUS, AND HEATHEN STATE OF THE COUNTRY—HOW THE GOOD SCOTTISH MONK AIDAN CAME AND TAUGHT THE PEOPLE—HOW HE BECAME BISHOP OF LINDISFARNE, AND GAINED THE RESPECT OF ALL RANKS—PIETY OF KING OSWALD—REASONS WHY THE SCOTTISH PRIESTS SUCCEEDED SO WELL IN CONVERTING THE HEATHEN.

[A.D. 633—643.] THE fierce heathen kings who had attacked Edwin, and killed him in battle, desolated the whole country, sparing neither women nor children in their fury. Paulinus, anxious to preserve the widowed Queen Ethelburga and her children from danger, escaped with her into Kent, guarded by a trusty band of Christian soldiers. He never again returned to York ; but having been kindly received by the King of Kent, who was a Christian, he afterwards became Bishop of Rochester, and died at a good old age, much beloved and respected.

Edwin left no child to succeed him on the throne ; one son had fallen by his side in battle, the other had been taken prisoner, his remaining children having escaped with their mother into Kent. After a good deal of fighting and bloodshed, the next king we find reigning in Northumbria after Edwin, is Oswald. He was the younger son of the king who reigned before Edwin, and as he was a wise Christian prince, it was a fortunate thing for the country when he came to the throne. No king is more honoured by the writers of his time than Oswald. We are told that before the last great battle, which delivered the country from the heathen kings, he placed the Christians' ensign, a cross, in front of the soldiers, and, devoutly kneeling, prayed for deliverance and victory. “ This sign of the holy rood,” he said, “ is our token of blessing ; at this rood let us bow, not to the tree, but to the Almighty Lord that hung upon the rood for us, and pray Him to defend the right.” Oswald's prayer was heard ; he gained the victory, and the throne became his.

You remember that I told you, in my last chapter, that in course of time the *British clergy* came forth from their retreats

in Wales and Scotland, and greatly helped the Roman Christians in spreading God's truth. It so happened, that during his troubles Oswald and some of his nobles had taken refuge among the Scottish princes, and there had learnt to know the true God and to worship Him. They received baptism from the disciples of the good Columba, who, you remember, had settled in the little island of Iona, and founded a monastery there. As soon as he became king, Oswald sent to ask these Scottish princes to send him some good man to teach his people the Christian faith, which had been sadly forgotten during the late wars. After some consideration, their choice fell upon a monk named Aidan, who, King Alfred tells us, was full of zeal and the love of God. At first they had chosen a monk for the work, who returned out of heart, and full of complaints against the fierce untamed natives. "You seem to me," said Aidan, "to have been too hard with these unlearned men; remember the Apostle Paul's practice, feed them with the milk of gentler doctrine till they are prepared for that which is more perfect." Aidan's wise remark so pleased the Scottish council, that they at once determined on sending him to Oswald. In a short time the King made him Bishop of Lindisfarne, which is the first notice we have of the see of Durham, as it is now called. Aidan was a monk of Iona, and soon after his departure several other monks and priests joined him in the good work, and became much loved and respected for their holy lives and earnest preaching. That you may form some idea of the character of this good bishop, I cannot do better than quote the words of Bede, who most likely talked with him, or at all events must have seen the good effects produced by his earnestness. "He was one who seemed neither to covet nor to love any of this world's goods, and all the gifts he received from princes or rich men he distributed to the poor. Wherever he went, whether to town or village, he journeyed on foot, never riding on horseback unless some urgent need required it. He asked all the rich and poor he met whether they were Christians: if they were not, he invited them to learn the faith; if they were, he sought by discourse to strengthen their faith, and by words and deeds to encourage them in works of mercy. Those who journeyed with him, whether clergy or others, were seen employed, either in reading the Scriptures, or in learning how to sing psalms—that is, when they were not employed in holy prayers. If ever he was invited to the King's table, he went with one or two of his priests, and when he had eaten, he soon *rose, and took his leave, to return to read and pray. To the rich and powerful he gave his reproofs without fear or favour,*

offering them no present, but entertaining them with hospitable cheer, when they visited him in his house. He spent a good deal of the money given him in buying off those who had been unjustly sold for slaves, and many of those whom he had thus redeemed he afterwards converted to the faith, and when they had been well taught he promoted them to the sacred order of the priesthood.”*

When Aidan first came into Northumbria he knew nothing of the Saxon language; but King Oswald, who had learnt to speak Scotch during his banishment in that country, used to interpret the words while Aidan preached to his earls and thanes. “It was a fair sight,” says Bede, “to see a Christian king so employed, and a striking instance of the care of Providence, turning the misfortunes of his youth to a means of blessing.” Like Edwin, this good king fell in battle, but the religion he had loved and valued so much during his life sustained and comforted him as he lay covered with wounds on the bloody field. His last prayer breathed the spirit of Christian love: “Spare, Lord, the souls of my people.”

I think, dear children, if you have followed me carefully up to this point in our history, you will have found out what was the great secret of the success of these early Christian preachers. The noble example they set, and the simple, holy lives they lived, proved, under God, the chief means whereby so many were brought to give up a faith which generally produced such different results. The preaching of Columba, of Augustine, of Paulinus, and of Aidan, would have been all in vain, and their zeal of little use, if they had not taken pains to act up to what they taught. Augustine’s sermon seemed to have but little effect on the mind of King Ethelbert; he still hesitated to declare himself a Christian; but when he saw how different was the conduct of these monks to the heathen that surrounded them, he and his nobles were convinced, and believed with all their heart that Augustine had spoken the truth. And does not all this teach us a useful lesson? God gives us all power in our small way, young as well as old, to make others better and happier by our example. A boy who loves the truth; who scorns to injure any child, or any creature weaker than himself; who refuses to return an angry blow, and yet bravely fights like a champion for those who cannot protect themselves; such a boy will shame the liar into speaking the truth, and make the coward brave: and though his words may be forgotten or unheeded, his example will live in the hearts of others long *after he has passed away.*

* Bede, quoted by Churton, p. 62.

About fifty-five years after the landing of Augustine, the whole of England seems to have become Christian, except the county of Sussex. Is it not singular that the county of Kent should have been the first to give up the worship of idols, and yet that Sussex, which you know stands next to Kent in the map, was the last in all England to receive the truth? The remarkable progress Christianity made during the last part of this time is mainly owing to the labours of the good British monks from Columba's monastery; and I am sure it was a happy thing for England when God put it into Oswald's heart to send to the Scottish princes for a good bishop. Do you not think so?

CHAPTER XIII.

VENERABLE BEDE—HIS USEFUL LIFE AND HAPPY DEATH—ACCOUNT OF THE SAXON MONASTERIES, AND HOW THEY WERE A BENEFIT TO THE COUNTRY—INDUSTRY OF THE MONKS—ABUSE OF THE MONASTERIES.

[A.D. 671—735.] BEFORE I proceed with our history, I must give you a short account of the good writer Bede, whose words I have several times quoted; there is much to admire in his character, and a good deal to be learnt from him. What a treasure his history of the times is to us, the first history of the Church in England ever written—written, too, at a time when the events recorded were still taking place. Up to this period, the only way in which people could learn anything about past history was by hearing old people talk about what had happened in their time, and what had been told them by their parents and grand-parents before them; so, by this means, the history of past events was handed down by word of mouth from father to son; but, as you may suppose, this was a very uncertain way of learning the real truth. Bede's history, which is still preserved to us, is therefore of great value, more particularly as he was able to see a great many choice and learned books, which had been brought from Rome, and placed in the library of the monastery. Bede, or Venerable Bede (as he is generally called out of respect), was born in Northumberland, about the year 671. Being an orphan, he was entrusted to the care of his uncle, the Abbot of Biscop, to be brought up. He showed his love for religion at a very early age, and, as he grew up, he still remained in his uncle's monastery, spending the whole of his time in studying his Bible, writing *and useful books*, or singing in the church. "I found it,"

he says, "delightful either to learn, to teach, or to write." His chief work was an explanation of the books of Scripture, a great part of which was taken from the works of the early Christian writers, or "Fathers," as they are generally called, with a good deal of his own added. This work, which he continued with great patience, took him twenty years to finish. But while he was teaching so many people by his writings, he never forgot his other duties, but spent a good deal of his time helping the young men of the monastery in their studies, and by his advice and example encouraged them to take pleasure in reading good and useful books. At the time of his last illness he was busy translating the Gospel of St. John into the Saxon language, chiefly for the use of his pupils; "for," said he, "I do not wish my boys to be employed after my death in reading what will do them no good." We may be sure the boys loved and respected so kind a teacher; and though they must have grieved very much when he was taken from them, still we may hope that many of them tried to imitate him as they grew up, by improving themselves and being of use to others.

I shall now give you a short account of this good man's last hours, because I think it is a comfort to us to remember that the same glorious faith we believe in now cheered and sustained this holy Christian on his deathbed many hundred years ago. Venerable Bede was sixty-three years old when he was seized with his last mortal disease; it was about a fortnight before Easter, in the year 735; but he lingered on till the eve of Ascension Day, encouraging and cheering those who wept around his bedside by his fervent prayers and holy advice. He quoted several of his favourite passages of Scripture to them, and told them, while they lived, often to dwell on the time when they would breathe no more, and remember how little that was really good they had done during their lifetime. Then he recited the fine old Saxon hymn, beginning—

"Ere the pilgrim soul go forth
To its journey far and lone,
Who is he that yet on earth
All his needful part hath done?"

Then, addressing his boys, he said, "Learn, my children, while I am with you, for I know not how long I shall continue: but I have lived long; God hath rightly appointed my portion of days; I desire to go, and to be with Christ. I have not," he said, "passed my life among you in such a manner as to be *ashamed to live, neither do I fear to die, for we have a kind Master.*" On Tuesday before Ascension Day, he called all his

friends around him, and gave to each some little present, as a token of his love; he then called to mind that there still remained one sentence of his translation of St. John's Gospel unfinished. The youth who had been writing the words, as he dictated them, in the morning approached his bedside, and at Bede's request set down the few remaining sentences. "Now it is finished," said the boy, closing the book. "You say well," said Bede, "it is finished: let me rest my head on thy hands, that though I can no longer kneel, I may still look towards the holy place where I used to pray and call upon my Father." Then, with his dying lips, he repeated the fine old prayer on which our collect for the Sunday after Ascension Day is founded. "O King of Glory, Lord of Virtue, who didst ascend this day triumphant into the heavens, leave us not destitute, and send upon us the promise of the Father, the Spirit of Truth." As he breathed the last words, his gentle spirit passed away to its home of peace above. When you say "Amen" to this ancient prayer, bear in mind that it was uttered by one of the best and wisest of our countrymen on his deathbed, and that it has been used in our Church prayers more than a thousand years; indeed, ever since the time that Gregory the Great gave it to Augustine to use in the English churches, together with a great many others which still find a place in our Prayer-book.

Should you ever be fortunate enough to go to Jarrow, the place where the Venerable Bede lived and died, you may see the very chair he used while at his studies; a rough old oaken seat certainly, but what a valuable relic of the past! His bones were afterwards placed by King Stephen in the cathedral at Durham, where a plain stone, with these few simple words inscribed on it, marks this good Christian's dwelling-place:—

"Here rest the bones of the Venerable Bede."

You will see, from all I have told you, that the monks in the Saxon monasteries led neither idle nor useless lives. Some of their best and wisest men worked very hard. They encouraged and preserved during troublous times much that was very valuable, and gave the ignorant people round them a great deal of good and useful information. Bede did not spend the whole of his life in study, but we are told he travelled abroad, "for the object of bringing home to his countrymen something useful, and out of the common way." He was the first to introduce stone for building houses and churches, instead of wood, which the Saxons had hitherto used, and which is not of course nearly *so strong and lasting*. Bede also taught his countrymen to *make glass windows, like the Romans*.

Before I conclude this chapter, I am sure you would like to hear how the monks in the Saxon monasteries passed their time. Though many of them were nobles, and people of high rank, they were not too proud to work hard, like servants, and took pleasure in doing all sorts of useful things, such as milking cows, working at the mill, or in the garden, or kitchen ; we even read of an abbot working like a common blacksmith at the forge, and ploughing and sowing like a labourer. All these useful things they taught the poor, who of course could find no excuse for being idle while the clergy worked so hard. Then monasteries were often built where the ground was damp and unhealthy, and the soil so poor that no one had cared to plant or cultivate it ; but we are told that no sooner were the monks established in their new abode than “the marshes were drained, the woods cleared, and the waste land improved and cultivated.”*

As I have already told you, some of the monks employed their time in teaching little children ; there were no large schools in England then, as there are now, and these monasteries were the only places where children could learn to read, or be taught their duty to God and to their fellow-creatures. Then the monks went a long distance to preach, and read the Bible to the people in the villages round ; and as it was a very rare thing for a person to be able to read for himself, you may imagine how ignorant people would have been about the Bible and the Christian faith, unless the monks had been clever men and willing to impart their knowledge to others. I told you that in the ancient British monasteries many of the younger monks spent the whole of their time in making copies of the Scriptures, in order that in seasons of warfare and trouble the Word of God might still be preserved to the people. The Saxon monks also employed themselves zealously in this good work ; they were not content with merely writing out the words in a plain neat way, but took the greatest pains to paint many of the letters in gold and bright colours ; and after the books were finished, they were handsomely bound in velvet and precious stones. Some of these beautiful books or manuscripts, as they are generally called, are fortunately preserved to us, and when you go to the British Museum in London, or to the Library at Oxford, you can have the pleasure of looking at these fine old relics of our past history ; but remember with gratitude that it is mainly owing to the patience and labour of these good men that God’s Word has been handed down to us from age to age. Some of the best-bound *Bibles and Prayer-books* you see in our shops *now are copied from the designs of these monks, and many*

* *Southey’s Book of the Church.*

people are fond of painting texts in gold and coloured letters like those done many centuries back in the English monasteries.

Now that I have been telling you of all the good done by these monasteries, you will be the more sorry to hear that harm should have been done by them also; but in this world we must never expect to find things or people wholly without fault; and it is only fair that in judging any matter we should view both sides of the question. In course of time almost every one thought it his duty to retire to these places of seclusion, thinking God would be better pleased by their becoming monks, than if they continued to perform the daily work He had given them to do in their family. Consequently, you can well understand that many useful and necessary duties became neglected. Again, people of rank and wealth spent a vast deal of their money in building monasteries; and although we must admire the readiness with which they parted with their riches in God's service, we cannot but regret that they further thought it necessary to retire to the monasteries they had built, instead of spending their energies and time in the public office they held. The good and wise Bede saw the evil of all this: he thus speaks in one of his last letters: "We have had a long time of peace and calm, and now many of our people, themselves and their bairns, gentle and simple, are more bent upon going into minsters, and taking the shaven crown, than upon going to the camp exercise; what the end of this will be, another age will show."

But, in conclusion, when you hear monasteries spoken of as places of mere idleness and superstition, then remember all the good and useful things the monks did, and how God raised them up for His own wise purposes. And on the other side, when you are told that a life of retirement from active duty is more pleasing to God than any other, then bear in mind that we each have our work given us by God, and we have no right to neglect those home duties He has appointed us, for other occupations of our own seeking.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THEODORE BECAME ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—COUNCIL OF WHITBY—RETIREMENT OF THE SCOTTISH BISHOP COLMAN AND HIS MONKS FROM ENGLAND—THEIR PIOUS AND CONSISTENT LIVES—WISDOM OF THEODORE—BISHOP WILFRID OF YORK—HOW CHAD BECAME BISHOP IN HIS PLACE, BUT AFTERWARDS RESIGNED—WILFRID'S ACTIVITY AND ZEAL—HIS WEALTH AND MAGNIFICENCE—OPENING AND CONSECRATION OF RIPON CATHEDRAL.

[A.D. 643—670.] We must now go back to the time when the good King Oswald fell in battle. His brother Oswy reigned after him. This king, we are told, having done something very wrong in his early youth, was most anxious to show his penitence by supporting the Christian religion, which alone held out to him hopes of God's forgiveness.* It so happened that at this time there was no archbishop, either of Canterbury or York. Oswy wishing to have the vacant See of Canterbury occupied, sent to request the Pope of Rome to send him some holy man suited for the post. Like the wise Gregory, this Pope gladly promised to do his best to help the Saxons. The man on whom his choice fell was an abbot named Adrian, famed for his knowledge of the Bible, and respected for his holy life. This good man humbly declined the high office, but recommended a monk named Theodore, who happened then to be at Rome. And to show that he had not declined the archbishopric merely from a love of ease and quiet, Adrian agreed to go with Theodore to England and help him in his work. Theodore proved well worthy of the honour, and although he was sixty-six years of age when he was appointed archbishop, he left his own polished home in Italy without a murmur, and spent the few remaining years of his life toiling hard for the good of a strange, half-savage people. Surely it is to such men as this that our Lord's words of blessing especially apply: "Verily I say unto you, there is no man who hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."† It so happened that just before the arrival of Theodore in England, Oswy had called together a number of clergy, with Colman, the Scottish Bishop of Lindisfarne, at their head, to try and settle the troublesome question about the time of keeping Easter, which still remained undecided. Oswy's queen, who was the daughter of the good King Edwin, had been taught by the Roman clergy, who attended her, to keep Easter Day at quite a dif-

* *William of Malmesbury.*

† *St. Luke xviii. 29, 30.*

ferent time to her husband and his Scottish priests ; which caused, as you may suppose, a good deal of confusion and inconvenience. Oswy, who seems justly to have held the followers of St. Columba in great respect, was most anxious that they should agree to settle the matter peaceably with the followers of St. Augustine and Paulinus. Possibly it would have been better had he let the matter rest quietly for a time, and waited for the arrival of the gentle and wise Archbishop Theodore. As it happened, the Council, which was held in the old abbey of Whitby, ended much in the same manner as the famous meeting of St. Augustine with the British bishops ; nothing was settled after all, and what was worse, the good Bishop Colman, together with all his earnest clergy, took offence at the king's deciding in favour of Wilfrid, a young monk who spoke on the side of Rome, and soon afterwards resigned his bishopric, retiring with his whole party of monks to a monastery in Ireland. It was a sad loss to the English when these hardworking Christians left the country ; they had gained great influence over the people by their holy teaching and self-denying lives ; and though they refused to obey, as the Roman bishops did, any foreign bishop or Pope, they cheerfully submitted to the authority of their own bishop.

As I shall have nothing further to tell you about the Scottish monks, perhaps you would like to hear what Bede said of them, and then you will understand how it was people were so willing to listen to their teaching. "Very few houses," he says, "besides the church, were found at their departure ; they had no money but cattle, and if they received any money from rich persons, they immediately gave it to the poor ; there being no need to gather money or provide houses for the entertainment of the great men of the world, for such never went to the church except to pray and hear the Word of God. The king himself only came with five or six servants, and having performed his devotions in the church, departed. If they happened to take any food there, they were satisfied with only the plain daily food of the brethren ; for the whole care of these teachers was to serve God, not the world, to feed the soul, not the belly. So for this reason," continues Bede, "the religious habit was at that time in great veneration ; so that wherever any clergyman or monk happened to come, he was joyfully received by all persons, as God's servant ; and if they chanced to meet him upon the way they ran to him, and bowing, were glad to be signed by his hand, or blessed with his mouth. Great *attention was also paid to their exhortations, and on Sundays they flocked eagerly to the church, or the monasteries, not to*

feed their bodies, but to hear the Word of God; and if any priest happened to come into a village, the people flocked together to hear from him the Word of Life; for the priests went into the village on no other account than to preach, baptize, visit the sick, and, in few words, to take care of souls. They were so free from worldly avarice that none of them received lands or possessions for building monasteries unless compelled to do so by the authorities."

Theodore, the new archbishop, was a wise and charitable man, and one cannot help hoping that had the Scottish bishop and his monks remained at their posts the two different parties might have become good friends, and joined in teaching the people; particularly as we afterwards find the Scottish Church, in the year 710, agreeing to keep Easter at the same time as the English Church. So at last this troublesome matter was settled. Theodore by his wise conduct soon gained the confidence and respect of all parties, and the people willingly received him for their archbishop. He was a learned as well as a good man, and many of the rules he laid down proved of great benefit to the English Church. Among other things, he encouraged rich people to spend their money in building churches all over the country, and in providing good clergymen to preach in them; for, up to this time, you remember, most of the monks lived together by themselves in monasteries, without any settled system, just as they had done when Christianity was first established in England. Theodore also ordered that as soon as fresh provinces became Christianized new bishops should be appointed to govern them, that the monks and people should be properly attended to, and religion kept alive in the land. Theodore, being a clever man himself, felt the value of being well taught, and founded several good schools; the chief of these was the monastery of St. Augustine at Canterbury, of which the wise Adrian was made abbot.

I must now tell you about another famous man who lived at this time. You remember Wilfrid, the monk who had taken the side of the Roman Christians at the council of Whitby? Shortly afterwards he was made Bishop of York,* but as he refused to be consecrated, or set apart for his work, by any of the Scottish bishops, he went over to the French bishops for that purpose. King Oswy, offended at Wilfrid's want of respect for the Scottish bishops, appointed during his absence another bishop named Chad, who had before been a Saxon abbot, and a pupil of the good Scotch bishop Aidan. Chad proved well

* After the death of Paulinus, York became for a time only a bishop's See. *Hook's Lives of the Archbishops*, vol. i. p. 157.

worthy of his excellent master, leading the most simple life, and walking about to preach to and instruct his people in the villages, allowing himself no more ease and comfort than the poorest monk in his diocese. Wilfrid after his consecration in France returned to England; but you will be glad to hear that instead of feeling angry at Chad taking his place as Bishop of York, he retired into Kent, and employed himself in preaching, and ordaining clergy there. It so happened, however, that Theodore seems to have doubted whether Chad had any real right to the bishopric. "If," said this humble Christian to Theodore, "you have any doubt about it, I willingly resign the office, which I always felt unworthy to hold, and did but consent to take it out of obedience to my king."

Although Theodore seems to have been unwilling to urge the good Chad to resign, the latter wisely determined to do so, feeling that peace and goodwill were of far more value than his own worldly advancement. Wilfrid now became Bishop of York, but Theodore, struck with the humble and upright character of the good Chad, became the means of his appointment to the See of Lichfield. The fine old cathedral at Lichfield is named after this good man, but has been greatly altered and improved since his time. Wilfrid's mode of living was a complete contrast to that of the plain, hard-working Chad. Proud, haughty, and full of grand notions, he seems to have inspired his people with awe rather than with love, spending a large amount of money in outward show—for the bishops in those days had a great deal of wealth at their disposal.

Although Wilfrid thought too much of his own power, you will be glad to hear that he was not altogether idle, nor did he spend all his money in pomp and show; he often travelled about the country, followed by his monks, and a party of builders and stone-masons, the latter of whom he employed in restoring old churches and building new ones, whenever he could prevail on the noblemen and gentry to give him land. The monks at the same time taught the people to chant in church, and sing psalms. I dare say you have heard of the cathedral of Ripon. It was founded by Wilfrid, and was very strongly built of stone, like the churches he had seen in Italy. From what we read of this church, it seems to have been a square, rather ugly building, with marble pillars, but it was the best that could be built in those days, and was regarded by the Saxons as very magnificent. The opening and consecration of Ripon Cathedral must have been a very grand ceremony; *several Saxon princes and a great many nobles and others assembled.* The Bishop preached a sermon urging the people

to come forward and give their money freely to build more churches; he himself presented a splendid copy of the Four Gospels to the cathedral, the letters of which were painted in gold and brilliant colours, and the book bound in velvet, set with precious stones. I have already told you how willingly the people came forward to offer their money for the building of churches and monasteries. Unfortunately Wilfrid, not content with receiving their offerings for these good purposes, accepted a great many presents himself; and although he must have read in his Bible that "they who will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare," he seems to have forgotten or paid no heed to this warning. So we shall find that God wisely deprived him of the idol that was luring him away from his duty, and by sending trial and adversity instead of riches and ease, made the proud Bishop repent his selfishness. In the next chapter you will see how God chose him to be the instrument of spreading the blessings of Christianity into a part of England that still remained in heathen ignorance.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW WILFRID, BY THE ADVICE OF THEODORE, IS BANISHED THE COUNTRY—HOW THE POPE INTERFERED, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS—WILFRID RETIRES TO SUSSEX—HIS ZEAL IN CONVERTING THE NATIVES—FOUNDATION OF THE MONASTERY OF SELSEY—WILFRID RETURNS TO YORK—HIS DEATH AND CHARACTER.

[A.D. 670—709.] WILFRID'S wealth and power had by this time increased to such an extent, that King Egfrid, who was reigning in that part of England in place of his father Oswy, became alarmed, and summoned Archbishop Theodore to consult him in the matter. He proposed that Wilfrid's large diocese should be divided into two parts; but to this the Bishop indignantly refused to submit, and Egfrid, enraged at this obstinacy, took Theodore's advice, and banished Wilfrid from the country. Doubtless the Bishop felt very unhappy at being driven away thus suddenly from his comfortable home, and deprived of all his honours; but he lived to find that God had ordered the trial for his good and for the benefit of others.

Wilfrid of York was one of those characters who shine best in adversity: his *high spirit* and dauntless energy carried him *nobly through his difficulty*; and instead of wasting time in idly *mourning over the past*, he set to work in earnest to make up

for his past folly. You remember I told you the county of Sussex was the last in all England to give up the old heathen worship. I dare say this was partly owing to the Downs with which it is surrounded ; and at the time of which I am speaking the land was marshy and covered with thick wood ; besides which, the sea, we are told, quite encompassed some parts of it, and so shut it out from the rest of England. Wilfrid of York was the man chosen by God to bring the pagan people of this wild region to the true faith ; and well he performed his work. Wilfrid had before crossed over to Rome, and having persuaded the Pope to take up his cause, returned in triumph to England with some letters in his favour, which the Pope sealed with the image of St. Peter and St. Paul. These letters so sealed were called " Bulls ;" and this is the first Pope's " Bull " we ever read of as being sent to a king of England. Egfrid, seeing no reason why the Bishop of Rome should interfere in the matter, as he had not consulted him, treated the " bull " with the greatest contempt, and sent Wilfrid to prison as a rebel. The King's aunt, a good woman, afterwards obtained his release ; but the power of Egfrid was such that Wilfrid could find no safe retreat among the Christian provinces of England, and at last took refuge in the heathen county of Sussex. It so happened that the King of this county had already received baptism, but the greater number of his subjects were still worshipping idols, and although a good Scottish monk had founded a small monastery at a place near the sea called Bosham, " none of the natives," says Bede, " cared to follow their course of life or hear their preaching." Bishop Wilfrid, however, was by no means daunted, and wisely tried to gain the respect and love of the people before he attempted to teach them about the true God. When Wilfrid first set foot in Sussex, no rain had fallen for so long, that the poor natives were suffering dreadfully from famine. A great many destroyed themselves rather than endure a lingering death. Wilfrid led them to believe in the true God, by first showing them how to make use of the good things He had bestowed. The sea and rivers abounded with good fish, but the people were unable to catch them, owing to their want of skill. The Bishop and his men, having collected all the nets they could find, cast them into the sea, and caught on the spot three hundred fish, which they divided among the starving people. " By this benefit," writes Bede, " the Bishop gained the affections of them all, and they now readily listened to his preaching, hoping that as he had shown them how to get worldly food, he would teach them the way to get heavenly food also." The King of Sussex gave Wilfrid and his followers

some land at a place called Selsey, a dreary flat spot enough, almost surrounded by the sea, but soon to become the centre of a new and living faith. On this dismal spot Wilfrid founded a monastery, and on the day that he publicly baptized a great number of the people, we are told a soft plentiful rain fell, the parched earth revived, and the trees and grass recovered their bright fresh colour. No wonder the good monks regarded this as a token that God was blessing their labour of love; in those simple times every event of life was regarded as specially coming from God's hand, and although this pious feeling was sometimes carried too far, we should do well in these days to take a lesson from our Christian forefathers, and instead of thinking so highly of our own power and cleverness, give all the praise to Him who directs the small as well as the most important events of life.

On the death of King Egfrid, Wilfrid once more returned to York, after ten years of banishment. The good Archbishop Theodore died soon afterwards. You will be glad to hear that he and Wilfrid became good friends at last, and their old quarrel was quite forgotten. Theodore was of a peaceable, gentle character; his chief desire was to make his people agree among themselves, as he himself could not bear to live at enmity with any one. It would have been well had Wilfrid tried to imitate the Archbishop in this respect, but his haughty and overbearing temper seriously hindered his efforts to do good. When he got his own way again, and became rich and powerful, his quarrelsome temper would not allow him to live at peace with the other bishops, and he was again driven from his bishopric, which, however, he afterwards regained. He died in the year 709, and his remains were carried to his own monastery at Ripon, where a long epitaph was placed on his tomb, mentioning all the good deeds he had performed. Wilfrid's zeal, energy, and devotion to the English Church, were certainly well worthy of praise; but had he been less fond of show and more careful to control his temper, I cannot help thinking he would have had more influence over the people; and like the good Columba, Aidan, and Chad, would have gained respect for his teaching by the simplicity of his life. Nevertheless the good he wrought among the heathen people of Sussex ought always to be remembered by us with gratitude.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW THE SAXONS TAUGHT MANY OF THE HEATHEN IN OTHER COUNTRIES—
ACCOUNT OF BONIFACE—HIS ZEAL AND ENERGY—THE GREAT DIFFICULTIES
HE AND HIS MONKS ENCOUNTERED AMONG THE WILD PEOPLE OF GERMANY
—HIS MARTYRDOM IN THE CAUSE—HIS PIOUS CHARACTER AND DEVOTION.

[A.D. 715—755.] You know, dear children, when God bestows wealth and riches on us, He expects us to use a part of it for the benefit of those who have none; and the same rule must be observed with other gifts. “Freely ye have received, freely give,” are words which apply as well to spiritual blessings as to worldly riches. If we have found comfort from God’s truth ourselves, it should make us the more anxious to teach others, who are still in ignorance of the love and mercy of their heavenly Father.

You have already seen how much we English people owe to those good men, who in spite of every difficulty crossed the seas, landed on a foreign shore, and laboured diligently to impart to the heathen Saxons those religious blessings which God had bestowed on *them*. You will be glad to hear that when the Christian Church was fully established in this island, many of those who had embraced the true faith were not content to enjoy in selfish ease the blessings they had received, but longed to obey their Lord’s command, and to “teach and baptize other nations,” fulfilling the golden rule “to do unto others as they had been done by.”

I cannot tell you of all the good men who in those early times became missionaries or teachers of the heathen, but I will give you a short account of one or two, because I think every English child ought to know something of their history, that they may try and imitate their courage and perseverance. About the year 715, a monk named Winfred, a native of Crediton in Devonshire, excited by the example of other earnest men, determined to teach the wild people of Germany the blessed faith of the Gospel. Winfred had been brought up in the monastery of Exeter, and had become famous for his earnest preaching and for his activity in the cause of Christ. Before he set out on his difficult undertaking, he went to Rome and was consecrated by the Pope Missionary Bishop of the Germans, under the new name of “Boniface.” It so happened that a zealous English priest named Wilbrood (who had been brought up in Wilfrid’s monastery at Ripon) had crossed over into Germany *forty-six years* before, and had founded several Christian churches on the banks of the river Rhine, so that Boniface was

able to join this aged Christian in the good work of converting the natives. Wilbrood soon afterwards died, and then Boniface took his place. Being a bishop, he was able to ordain a great many other clergymen to help in the work: numbers joined him from England, and Christianity continued to spread rapidly among the heathen people, although the good missionaries were surrounded by every possible difficulty and danger. Many of them, like St. Boniface himself, ended a life of hardship and poverty by martyrdom, and like the early Christians we read of, gave up their lives rather than forsake the truth they preached. To give you some notion of the extreme peril and difficulty these good men went through in performing their work, I must tell you that the greater part of Germany in those early days was covered with dense forests, so thick that daylight could scarcely penetrate through the trees, and wherever living beings appeared, their cruel and savage aspect was calculated to strike terror into the bravest heart. They looked indeed almost as ferocious as the beasts they hunted for their food. One of the good priests ordained by Boniface begged to be sent with only two companions into the midst of these gloomy and unknown regions, intending if possible to build a church, and to persuade the barbarians to worship in it. "Go," said Boniface, "in the name of God, for the Lord is able to provide His people a home in the desert." St. Boniface may have believed many strange stories, and persuaded the heathen to believe them too; without doubt also he showed too much reverence for the Pope, and obeyed his commands too strictly; but for all this we must admire the noble faith these words display. When we see these humble-minded Christians carrying out in action all that they believed and taught, can we wonder that even the savage hearts of the German heathen were tamed, and that they were at last compelled to bow before the courage and holiness of these dauntless missionaries? A writer of the present day tells us that the brave monk and his two companions went into the thick forest, and for three days they saw nought but earth and sky and mighty trees, but they went on praying that Christ would guide their feet into the way of peace. On the third day they came to a dreary spot, which they searched round, and prayed that Christ would bless the place for them to dwell in; and then they built themselves little huts of beech bark, and abode there many days, serving God with holy fastings, and watchings, and prayers. Then the good monk returned to Boniface to tell him all that had been done, and then once more set out on his perilous undertaking, but this time alone. "He took, however, a trusty ass and as much food as he could

pack on it, and, axe in hand, rode away into the wild wood, singing his psalms." Every night before he lay down to sleep, "he cut boughs and stuck them up for a fence round him and the ass, to keep off the hungry wolves." Numbers of times was the life of this brave man in danger; "for the heathen Saxons were the cruellest of all tribes, and the gentlest death the missionaries could expect at their hands was to be knocked on the head before some hideous idol." But God rewarded their patience and faith, and soon a monastery was raised on a spot wild enough, it is true, but which the pious monk I have told you of afterwards declared to Boniface "was prepared for them of the Lord." For he says, "When I saw it I was filled with immense joy, and went on exulting, for I felt that by the prayers of the holy Bishop Boniface that place had been revealed to me, and the more I looked at it, the more I gave God thanks."

Supported by their bishop, the monks began clearing out the thick trees, and when the abbey was built, these good men "worked hard at carpentering, farming, gardening, writing, doctoring, teaching in the schools, and preaching to the heathen round," till numbers of the natives were taught to lead useful and industrious lives, and to believe in a God of love and peace. Truly, we must exclaim with the writer I have quoted, "God made these good monks, and had need of them."*

Boniface, after leading a life of active usefulness and enduring great hardships for the cause he preached, received a martyr's crown, and at his last request his remains were carried to the monastery of Fulda, the history of which I have just been telling you, and which he had always loved to visit and superintend. As I hope you have been interested in reading something about the life of this good missionary, perhaps you would like to hear what a German writer says of his death: "At the age of seventy, full of vigour and energy, he started on a tour through his diocese, preaching, converting, and baptizing thousands, destroying the temples of idols, and founding churches. A number of persons he had baptized were all to have assembled on a certain day to receive confirmation; the morning dawned, and Boniface waited with anxiety the arrival of the new converts. He heard the sound of an approaching multitude, but it was an armed host of furious pagans, who had sworn to murder on that day the enemy of their gods. The Christian youths who surrounded Boniface wished to fight for him, and were on the point of beginning the conflict, when the Bishop, followed by his clergy, begged them to desist, saying,

* Rev. C. Kingsley. Article in "Good Words."

‘Put down your swords, for the Holy Scriptures teach us not to return evil with evil, but with good. I have for a long time earnestly desired this day, and the time of my departure is now come; be strong in the Lord, and bear with thankful resignation whatever His grace sends; hope in Him, and He will save your souls.’* The words were scarcely uttered when the good old man was dragged away, and a violent death put an end to his long life of pious activity in God’s cause.”

Though Boniface left his own country to live among strangers, he never forgot his old home, nor ceased to feel a lively interest in the welfare of the English Church. He often wrote to his friends in England, and his letters are full of good advice, and breathe a spirit of fervent love for God’s Word. “Throw aside everything that hinders you,” he writes to a young Englishman, “and direct your whole study to the Holy Scriptures, and there seek the divine wisdom, which is more precious than gold; for what is more seemly for youth to strive after, or what can age possess more valuable, than the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, which will guide our souls, without being shipwrecked in the storm, to the shores of the heavenly Paradise, to the eternal heavenly joys of angels?”

In his old age, Boniface wrote to request his friend the Bishop of Winchester to send him a manuscript of the Prophets, which he had left behind, and which was written in very distinct letters. “If God incline you to grant this request,” he writes, “you can render no greater comfort to my old age, for in this country I am unable to obtain such a manuscript of the Prophets as I wish for, and with my weak eyesight I cannot read closely-written characters.” When we see what value these early Christians set on the Word of God, and what trouble and pains they took to obtain even one copy of it, and that only written with a pen, how thankful ought we to feel to God that in these days Bibles are so plentiful, that even the youngest child or the poorest person can buy a clearly printed copy of the sacred volume. Surely no one in these days can excuse himself for doing what is wrong by saying he is ignorant of God’s will and commandments.

* Neander’s Memorials of the Early Christian Life, p. 469.

CHAPTER XVII.

ALCUIN OF YORK—HOW HE BECAME CHIEF ADVISER OF THE EMPEROR CHARLEMAGNE, AND DID A GREAT MANY GOOD AND USEFUL THINGS—HOW ALCUIN AND THE ENGLISH BISHOPS CONDEMN THE POPE'S NEW DOCTRINE, THAT IMAGES OF SAINTS SHOULD BE PLACED IN THE CHURCHES—COUNCIL OF FRANKFORT—ALCUIN'S LOVE FOR THE BIBLE—STATE OF ENGLAND AT THIS PERIOD—PETER'S PENCE—SERVICE IN THE SAXON CHURCHES—HOW THE CHURCHES WERE BUILT.

[A.D. 735—794.] Now that we are talking about the good the Saxons did in other countries, I must not forget to mention the name of a very learned and excellent man who flourished about this time, and of whom Englishmen may justly feel proud. Alcuin of York was born about the year of Bede's death, 735, and was a pupil of Adrian, the learned man who you remember accompanied the Archbishop to England. Alcuin soon became famous for his singular ability and for the holiness of his life. It so happened that while travelling in Italy he met the celebrated French Emperor, Charlemagne, then the richest and most powerful sovereign of Europe. France had been for a long time in a very unsettled state, and consequently religion and learning had been suffered sadly to decline. Charlemagne had the good sense to perceive Alcuin's merit, and begged him to settle in France. Alcuin, after obtaining the consent of his sovereign and the Archbishop, accepted the offer, and became tutor to the young princes of France, and the chief friend and adviser of the Emperor himself, who always treated him with the utmost respect. This good Englishman proved well worthy of the honours bestowed upon him, and employed his whole time in devising all sorts of useful things for the benefit of his adopted country. Copies of the Scripture and books of prayer were at this time extremely scarce in France. Alcuin set about correcting the copies that remained. He sent one to each of the principal monasteries and cathedrals, and the bishops ordered the monks there to write out more copies; so that after a time the Word of God became distributed over a great part of Charlemagne's vast dominions. Alcuin also made a great many extracts from the "Fathers," or early Christian writers, considering that the sermons of these holy men were great helps to those who were studying the Bible. I must now mention one other very good thing that Alcuin did. You remember how I told you the Popes of Rome became very powerful after a time, and insisted on the different Churches obeying the rules they had laid down, however contrary they might be to Scrip-

ture and to the early Christian faith. Adrian, who was Bishop of Rome at this time, called together a Council, and decreed that images of the blessed Virgin Mary and of other saints should be placed in churches, that the people, by kneeling down before them, might be assisted in their worship of God. But although no actual worship of the image was intended, you may well imagine the ignorant and poor would soon begin to address their prayers to the images themselves, forgetting that God has said, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, to worship it."

It is a great satisfaction to know that all the English bishops, together with the wise and learned Alcuin, condemned this new doctrine with horror. Alcuin, who was then in England, wrote against this specious kind of idolatry, and the arguments he brought forward from Scripture and the Christian writers were so convincing and satisfactory that Charlemagne determined to do all in his power to check the evil. He called together a council of three hundred bishops at Frankfort, who solemnly condemned the Pope's new doctrine. So you see Alcuin was the means of checking for a long time the growth of error in France and England.

Before we take leave of this truly good and useful Christian, I will just quote a passage from a letter he wrote to the Emperor Charlemagne, and sent with a copy of the whole Bible which he had himself carefully corrected. The passage is full of interest, as showing the high value this learned man set on God's Word. "I have for a long time," he says, "been studying what present I could offer you not unworthy of the glory of your imperial power, and one which might add something to the riches of your royal treasures. I was unwilling that while others brought you all kinds of rich gifts, my poor wit should remain dull and idle, and that the messenger even of so humble a person as myself should appear before you with empty hands. I have at last found out, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a present which it befits my character to offer, and which it will not be unworthy of your wisdom to receive. Nothing can I offer more worthy of your great name than the Book which I now send, the Divine Scriptures, all bound up in one volume, carefully corrected by mine own hand. It is the best gift which the devotion of mine heart to your service, and my zeal for the increase of your glory, has enabled me to find." *

As I fear in my next chapter we shall come to a sad and stormy period of our history, when religion and learning were again all but extinguished in England, I think we shall find it

* Churton, p. 175.

pleasant and instructive to dwell a little longer on this time of learning and peace, when so many good and clever men flourished.

At this period the English Church taught, for the most part, doctrines that were pure and Scriptural, and gained the respect of the heathen by the holy and consistent lives of her bishops and monks. The English clergy, too, did their utmost to oppose the tyranny of the Popes of Rome, who in after times struggled hard to force the English Church to submit to their rules and obey their commands. Unfortunately some of the Saxon kings rather encouraged than opposed the Popes in their claim, although I do not think they could have foreseen all the evils that would arise from such unwise conduct. About the year 716, a pious king of Wessex, named Ina, made a pilgrimage to Rome, and while there founded a school for the Saxon youths, where they could be sent over and taught many things that could only be gained in that famous city of art and learning. Of course this school had to be supported, and for this purpose Ina demanded a tax of one penny from each of his subjects at home. It seemed only fair and right that they should pay something towards the education of their children; but after a time this practice, though good in itself, gave the Popes of Rome an opportunity of interfering with the liberty of the English people. After a few years had elapsed they actually compelled our ancestors for several centuries to pay the tax, which was called Peter's Pence, because it was collected on St. Peter's day. The money so collected, instead of being applied to the support of the school, was given away to the poor at Rome, or used for lighting up the Church in honour of St. Peter. No wonder that the English people rebelled against such an imposition as this, and that they frequently refused to pay the unjust tax altogether.

Before I conclude this chapter, I think it would interest you to hear what kind of service the Saxons had in their churches. Aldhelm, a good bishop of Sherborne, who lived about the year 700, took great pains to make the worship of God hearty and attractive to the people. The first organ used in England was built under his direction. He also translated the Psalms of David into the Saxon language, and taught the people to sing them, that they might the better join in the service at Church. Acca, Bishop of Hexham, followed in Aldhelm's footsteps. After building a handsome church at Hexham, he collected a valuable library of books, and being a good musician took great pains to have his choir taught to chant well in church. Unfortunately the Roman Christians thought so much of Latin, that

most of the prayers and hymns were offered up in that language, so that the greater part of the people were unable to join in the service themselves; but the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and some of the Psalms, seem to have been chanted in Saxon. Alfred tells us that the clergy of those days "were earnest both in preaching and learning," and that every Sunday and festival each priest expounded the Gospel unto all committed to his charge. Our Saxon forefathers strictly observed the Lord's Day, as a day of rest to be specially set apart for God's service. King Ina made a law against working on that day, and Sunday traffic of all kinds and journeying were forbidden. Up to this time those who could read were encouraged to study the Holy Scriptures for themselves; and if many of the people were ignorant of God's Word, it was solely from a scarcity of copies of the Bible, which, being written with a pen, were of course very expensive to buy. The Saxons seem also to have taken great delight in reading the lives of saints and good men; and although we must regret that a great deal of false legend was mixed up with what was good and true, still the example of holy men doubtless stirred up many who read their lives to follow in their footsteps, and strive after what was good and noble.

Although in the early times of which we are speaking, books were rare, happily those that the people possessed were calculated rather to improve than debase their minds; and if in these days we can boast of a vast number of good books that were unknown to our ancestors, we have at the same time a great many wicked and foolish newspapers and books which they were fortunate enough not to possess.

When the Saxons first conquered the Britons you remember they destroyed all the buildings they could find, and you may be sure that such churches as had been built shared the general ruin. It is certain we have hardly any remains of old British or Roman churches.*

The Saxons, when first converted to Christianity, used chiefly wood for their churches, so that they would not be likely to last long; and as these churches were almost all rebuilt at a later period, we have hardly any remains whatever of old Saxon buildings. We know, however, that at the end of the seventh century stone churches were introduced. Wilfrid alone built three, at York, Ripon, and Hexham, and Bede tells us of the

* The ancient church of St. Martin near Canterbury, which King Ethelbert allowed St. Augustine to use for Christian worship, still stands, and although much altered since that time, old Roman bricks may still be found in the walls.

building of stone churches at Wearmouth and Jarrow. But even these were partly rebuilt and much altered afterwards, so that it is very difficult to discover which part of the building really belongs to the Saxon period.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RAVAGES OF THE DANES IN THE REIGN OF KING EGBERT—CHARACTER OF ETHELWULF—HIS SON ALFRED ASCENDS THE THRONE—MISERABLE STATE OF THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE—STORY OF THE ESCAPE OF THE BISHOP OF LINDISFARNE AND HIS MONKS—THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ABBEY OF CROYLAND—MASSACRE OF THE ABBOT AND MONKS—ALFRED'S CHARACTER—HIS EFFORTS TO REVIVE LEARNING—HIS ENERGY AND PIETY.

[A.D. 802—901.] We have now arrived at the time when all England became nominally united under one king, Egbert. The English Church had enjoyed a long period of peace and prosperity, but it pleased God, in His wisdom, to send upon His people a bitter storm of desolation and misery, that they might once more learn to distrust their own strength, and rely solely on the help of their Almighty Protector.

Egbert ascended the throne in the year 802; but no sooner was he firmly established in his kingdom, than he had to contend with a new and terrible enemy. You have often read in history of the dreadful havoc produced in our country from the invasion of the Danes, a savage piratical people, who landed in vast hordes, from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Like the old Saxons, these Danes were heathen, and took delight in destroying and burning wherever they went, and having learnt no useful or peaceable arts, they merely cared to settle in England for the sake of plunder. When they had destroyed everything valuable in the neighbourhood of their settlement, they removed to another place, spreading misery and desolation on every side. Their gods, like those of the Saxons, were deities of war and evil, and accordingly, hating the Christian religion, the Danes destroyed every church and monastery they came near, murdering the monks and clergy, or forcing them to flee. It is sad to think of the number of valuable manuscripts and relics lost to us at this time, and of the many fine old monasteries and churches which fell to rise no more. Egbert gained but few victories over the Danes. In 833 his army was totally routed, and the Bishops of Sherborne and Winchester, who were bravely fighting for their religion and country, fell in the bloody field, together with a large number of the nobles. Egbert died

in the year 838, leaving the kingdom to his son Ethelwulf. This prince is chiefly famous as being the father of our celebrated King Alfred. According to an early writer, he was of "a heavy, sluggish disposition,"* and although urged by two of his bishops to exert himself in defending the country, he was so inactive that the Danes were successful in most of the battles. At the time when his presence was most needed at home, he started on a journey to Rome, with his son Alfred. Although Ethelwulf took this journey from pious motives, I cannot help thinking he would have shown more true religion in remaining at his post, and supporting his people in the hour of danger.

Ethelwulf, while at Rome, restored the school which Ina had built for the education of the Saxon youths, which had been destroyed by fire, and at the same time his young son Alfred was confirmed by Pope Leo, who undertook to be his godfather.† In the meantime the Danes continued their ravages, and as they possessed plenty of ships, and the Saxons had none, they were enabled to land without difficulty on any part of the coast. They committed all sorts of cruelties, sparing neither old nor young, male nor female. Ethelwulf was succeeded by his three elder sons, who all reigned in turn. It was about this time that the Danes made a furious descent upon the North, where Christianity had so long flourished, and where the finest monasteries and churches had been built. You remember how in those days the monasteries were the only places where all that was most valuable could be preserved; and when they were destroyed, together with the good monks, the people had no means of learning about God, or hearing His Word; besides, what little they had already learnt was soon forgotten in this unsettled time of warfare and trouble. No wonder our wise King Alfred, when he came to the throne, sadly lamented the state of barbarism and ignorance into which his people had fallen. Many of the learned monks, together with their young pupils, had been either murdered by the Danes, or forced to quit the country; and those who had been newly ordained to supply their places had enjoyed but little opportunity of studying for their sacred office. This will explain the reason why Alfred, at the time of his accession, declared that "the clergy were quite unable to translate the Latin language into their own tongue; nor could they even understand the ordinary prayers used in the worship of the Church."

In their descent upon the North, the Danes destroyed the ancient monasteries of Ripon, Hexham, Whitby, and Lindisfarne, whose histories I am sure you have been interested in

* William of Malmesbury, p. 98.

† Asser.

hearing. These cruel pirates, not content with seizing everything valuable, and destroying all the useful and costly books, murdered the monks and wreaked their vengeance on defenceless women and children. But in this dark season of trial God did not forsake His Church, although for some wise purpose He allowed evil to triumph for a time. There is an interesting story told of the escape of the good Bishop of Lindisfarne, together with all his monks, and a large body of Christian people. On the approach of the savage Danes, Bishop Eardulph hastily commanded his monks to take the bones of Cuthbert, a former bishop, together with the remains of Aidan and King Oswald; and collecting all the holy vessels and Church books, the little band of true believers started on their weary, perilous retreat over the Cheviot hills and across to the shores of Ireland. How sad they must have felt as they bade a last adieu to that home which was associated in their minds with all that was most venerable and sacred! Doubtless many were the longing looks they cast back on the handsome monastery and abbey, which had stood as a witness for God for more than two hundred years, and which must so soon fall a prey to the fire and sword of the heathen. After undergoing unheard-of difficulties, and several times but narrowly escaping from the hands of their enemies, they landed safely in Ireland. Before long, however, the Bishop became most anxious to return to his post (which he regretted ever having quitted), and if possible to collect his scattered flock. So the band of fugitives once more returned to England, and took refuge in a small monastery in the North, which, from its secluded situation in a thick wood, had escaped the vengeance of the Danes. Here, for some years, the spark of true religion was kept alive, when all around was enveloped in thick darkness. There is also a very touching account given by Ingulph of the destruction of the fine old abbey of Croyland, not far from Peterborough. It was midnight when the murderous Danes approached the sacred spot. The good Abbot Theodore and his monks had just risen to join in the vigil service. Theodore's first care on discovering the danger was to dismiss the younger monks with the valuables to a place of safety, and gathering round him the children and some old people who remained behind, he entered the church and calmly proceeded with the service. The faithful band of believers knew that death was certain, but determined to stand at their post till the last, like brave and true Christians as they were. Meantime the lurid light kindled by the Danish torches grew brighter and brighter, as they approached nearer; but all was silence in the monastery, and the fierce enemy was about to

retire, when the distant sound of the midnight chanting fell on their ears. They at once rushed to the church, burst open the sacred doors, and with one stroke of the axe cut down the good Abbot, who was kneeling in prayer at the altar; nor was the bloody work complete until all, both old and young, had shared the same fate as their beloved Superior. The noble abbey was consumed in the flames, but the Christian martyrs still live to join their songs of praise with the angels in heaven.

At this period, the condition of the English Church was certainly most deplorable; but we shall see how God, true to His promise "that He would be with His Church to the end of the world," raised up a deliverer, and once more revived the sinking hearts of the people. In the year 872, Alfred, by the death of his brother Ethelred, obtained the crown, which I believe the poorest man in England could hardly have coveted. We are told that "every place was filled with rapine and slaughter, and the King, after battling for nine years with the heathen Danes, found that all that remained to him of his kingdom were the three counties of Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Somersetshire."* At first Alfred was wholly overwhelmed with the difficulties of his situation, and at the beginning of his reign took little or no interest in the affairs of his kingdom. After a time, however, he was roused to a sense of his duty by the persuasions of a good monk named St. Neot, and soon began in real earnest to bestir himself for the good of his people. Asser, Bishop of Sherborne and friend of Alfred, who wrote the king's life, tells us in a few forcible words how God caused Alfred's troubles to work together for his good. "It pleased God," he writes, "to give this illustrious king the experience of both extremes of fortune; to suffer him to be hard pressed by enemies, to be afflicted by adversities, to be humbled by losing the respect of his friends, as well as to gain victories over his foes, and to find prosperity in the midst of reverses, that he might know that there is one Lord of all, to whom every knee shall bow, and in whose hands are the hearts of kings; who putteth down the mighty from their seat and exalteth the humble, who willeth that His faithful ones in the height of success should sometimes feel the rod of adversity, that they may neither despair of His mercy when brought low, nor when exalted be proud of the honour they enjoy, but know to Whom they owe it all."

I shall not here take you step by step through all Alfred's difficulties in his contests with the Danes, and his final triumph over them, because you have already read all about this in your History of England; but I think it will better suit our present

* William of Malmesbury, p. 113.

subject to dwell on the character of this truly wise and good sovereign, and see how love for God and the Christian faith influenced all his actions. The writer I have already quoted tells us that "the private life of Alfred was to be admired and celebrated with the highest praise;" and although the greater part of his reign was passed "amid the sound of trumpets and the din of war," he found time to make admirable laws both for the religious worship and the discipline of his people. When Alfred himself began to feel the value of learning, he became most anxious that his people should be taught all the good and useful things that had well-nigh been forgotten or lost in the late season of misery and warfare. To this end he invited learned men of other countries to settle in England; he raised up new monasteries, repaired many of the ruined churches, and built new ones. The school at Oxford, which had been established by Archbishop Theodore, and had afterwards been allowed to fall into decay, was restored by him, and became the foundation of one of the grandest universities of the world. Alfred also built the church of St. Peter's at Oxford, and the cathedral of Winchester. Assisted by Bishop Asser, and by Plegmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, this good king translated a great part of the Bible into the Saxon language, together with Venerable Bede's History of the Church; indeed, every moment of Alfred's time was employed usefully, and all the energies of his mind and body were spent in trying to repair the mischief done by the Pagans to his country and people. King Alfred had a great love for the Psalms of David, and at his death, which took place in the year 901, he was employed in translating them into Saxon. We are told "he always carried in his bosom a copy of the Psalms selected for each day, for the purpose of carefully reading them when he had any leisure."* Alfred was also a true poet himself; he coveted not the world's praise and honour, but his sole desire was to elevate the minds of his people by his writings. The following beautiful lines were written by him, and they give us a true and just idea of his singular piety and talent. They are the closing stanzas of a hymn of praise to the Almighty, and have been turned into English verse by a writer of our own day:—

"Forgive now, Ever Good! and give to us,
That in our minds we may up soar to Thee,
Maker of all things! through these troublous ways;
And from amidst these busy things of life,
O tender Father! Wielder of the world!
Come unto Thee, and then thro' Thy good speed,

* William of Malmesbury, p. 121.

With the mind's eyes well opened, we may see
 The welling spring of Good, that Good, Thyself,
 O Lord, the King of Glory ! Then make whole
 The eyes of our understandings, so that we,
 Father of angels, fasten them on Thee !
 Drive away this thick mist which long while now
 Hath hung before our mind's eyes, heavy and dark ;
 Enlighten now these mind's eyes with Thy light,
 Master of life ! for Thou, O tender Father,
 Art very brightness of true light Thyself ;
 Thyself, Almighty Father ! the sure rest
 Of all Thy fast and true ones ; winningly
 Thou orderest it that we may see Thyself ;
 Thou art of all things origin and end ;
 O Lord of all men ! Father of angels ! Thou
 Easily bearest all things without toil ;
 Thou art Thyself the way and leader too
 Of every one that lives, and the pure place
 That the way leads to : all men from this soil
 Throughout the breadth of being yearn to Thee !" *

His energy is the more remarkable because during his whole life he suffered from a most painful complaint. Asser tells us, that "If through the mercy of God his disorder left him for a single hour, night or day, he was constantly filled with dread of its return." Alfred's piety must have been sincere, for his actions were as pure and good as his words ; but we know even the best and wisest men have their faults, and we cannot help regretting that he should have allowed his people to believe and accept some new and false doctrines taught by the Pope of Rome. At this period the placing of images in churches became more general, and people began to pay almost as much respect to the Blessed Virgin Mary as to our Saviour Jesus Christ. In after years these errors led to infinite evil, and prepared the way for still more false and unscriptural notions. Yet, for all this, Alfred's reign was a glorious one for the English Church and nation, and at this distant period of time we are still feeling the benefit of many of his wise laws. Like a true patriot, Alfred's chief desire was that the good he was enabled to do his people might not die with him. "I have," he says, "desired to live worthily while I lived, and after my death to leave to men that should come after me a remembrance of good works." Truly the last wish of this Christian prince is accomplished, for as long as England exists, the name of the good King Alfred must ever be held in veneration.

Before concluding this chapter, I will just quote the following admirable lines, which I have copied from an old Anglo-Saxon poem.* They are supposed to have been addressed by

* King Alfred's Poems, turned into English metre by Martin F. Tupper.

the dying Alfred to his son and successor Edward, and breathe a spirit of noble piety :—

“Thus quoth Alfred—‘My dear son, come near,
 Sit thou beside, and I will teach thee here.
 I feel mine hour is wellnigh come, my son,
 My face is white, my days are almost done ;
 Soon must we part, I to another throne,
 And thou, in all my state, shall stand alone :
 I pray thee—for mine own dear child thou art—
 Lord of this people, play their father’s part ;
 Be thou the orphan’s sire, the widow’s friend ;
 Comfort the poor man, and the weak defend ;
 With all thy might
 Succour the right,
 And be strong against the wrong.
 And thou, my son, by law thyself restrain,
 So God shall be thy Guide, and glorious gain :
 Call thou for help on Him in every need,
 And He shall give thee greatly to succeed.’”

CHAPTER XIX.

EVIL INFLUENCE OF THE DANES—TRIAL BY ORDEAL—WISDOM OF ARCHBISHOP PLEGMUND—COMMENCEMENT OF THE DIVISION BETWEEN THE MONKS AND CLERGY—LIFE OF ST. DUNSTAN—HIS EDUCATION AND SINGULAR ABILITY—HE IS ATTACKED WITH BRAIN-FEVER—HOW HE ENTERED A FOREIGN MONASTERY, AND BECAME A STANCH UPHOLDER OF THE MONASTIC SYSTEM—HE IS ENCOURAGED AND SUPPORTED BY ARCHBISHOP ODO—CHARACTER OF ODO—STORY OF KING EDWY AND HIS QUEEN—DUNSTAN’S BITTERNESS AGAINST EDWY—MELANCHOLY DEATH OF THE YOUNG KING AND QUEEN.

[A.D. 901—959.] THE harm the fierce Danes did to our country was not confined to the destruction of all that was good and useful in the monasteries ; many of the clergy had been murdered, and none had been ordained to supply their places, and so the Saxons soon forgot the good things they had learnt from the lips of their teachers. Meanwhile the Danes, in those parts where they settled, taught the people many cruel and heathenish superstitions. Perhaps you have heard of the trial by ordeal, which became very general in England after the arrival of the Danes. When any person was accused of some crime of which he declared himself innocent, instead of judging him, as we do now, in a court of law, and taking great pains to find out from others whether the accused was guilty or not, the Saxons and Danes ordered the person to carry red-hot irons about, or to do some other equally dangerous thing. If he remained

unhurt, he was declared innocent, and escaped punishment : but you know God's laws cannot be altered ; the innocent as well as the guilty must almost always suffer by grasping hot iron, or falling into deep water. So by this foolish law, you may imagine, many an innocent person was condemned, whilst the guilty escaped punishment.

The good Archbishop Plegmund, who assisted King Alfred in his studies, was a wise and diligent man. He created several new bishoprics, besides ordaining many fresh clergy to supply the places of those who had been murdered by the Danes. Indeed Plegmund seems to have done his utmost to keep alive true religion ; but he lived in sad, troublous times, during one of the darkest periods the English Church has ever gone through. But God, at this time as well as in every age, preserved His Church from utter ruin, and after some years we find many of the cruel Danes becoming Christians, for the Saxons compelled the Danes they conquered to renounce their heathen faith, and embrace Christianity. Although a mere outward profession of faith, such as this, would have been of no value in God's sight if the heart remained hardened, still we may hope that many believed sincerely, when they saw the superiority of the Christian faith over their own barbarous and cruel religion.

At this time an important discussion arose in the English Church : the question was whether it was advisable to rebuild the monasteries, or to erect instead more parish churches over the country. Instead of the clergy living together in bodies in the monasteries, some people thought it would be better for the country if they all married and lived at their separate villages, as you know they do in these days. You must bear in mind that the state of society at the time of which I am speaking was very different to what it is now. The people had no means of getting useful knowledge for themselves, as they can do in these days, and the country was so often desolated by warfare, that you cannot be surprised that many even of the best men thought religion and learning could never exist unless the clergy strengthened themselves, by banding together in large, strong buildings. A good deal of this was very true ; but it is sad to think with what animosity the subject was discussed, and how for years the two parties struggled for the mastery.* At this

* The clergy who lived as monks in the monasteries were called "regulars;" those who preached in the parish churches, and lived at their own houses, were called "seculars;" but as simple words are the best, we will distinguish the rival parties by calling the regulars monks, and the seculars clergy.

juncture a remarkable character appears in our history. St. Dunstan, who, as we shall see afterwards, became Archbishop, was a stanch friend and upholder of the monasteries, and while he lived, and for years afterwards, the monastic order, as they are called, entirely triumphed over the "secular" clergy. Perhaps no man has been more foolishly applauded on the one hand, or more unjustly condemned on the other, than Dunstan; and as I am anxious you should form something like a just opinion of his character, I propose giving you a short sketch of his life, bringing before you both his good points and his bad ones. Dunstan was born of a noble family, in the year 925, at Glastonbury. This place boasted of a very ancient monastery, where a band of learned Irish monks taught the children of those nobles who lived in the neighbourhood. The young Dunstan, who was full of intelligence and perseverance, soon became distinguished among his schoolfellows for his cleverness and ready wit. Unfortunately, instead of checking him, his parents, proud of his superiority, did all in their power to urge him forward, and a brain-fever was the result. There is a curious story told of him, how in his delirium he rushed one night into the church, the roof of which was being restored, and climbing the scaffolding which the workmen had left, he fell down into the aisle, where he was discovered in the morning sleeping quietly and uninjured, the fever having entirely left him. Neither Dunstan nor his friends could account for a circumstance so unusual, and so they attributed it to a miracle, and regarded it as a proof of his future sanctity.

I have told you of this story about Dunstan because I think, before we condemn him, as many have done, for wilfully imposing on the people the most absurd stories about the devils and angels that appeared to him, we should bear in mind that during all his lifetime he was subject to violent attacks of brain fever. While these attacks lasted his mind was doubtless haunted by all sorts of wild fancies; and I have no doubt he felt firmly convinced in his own mind that he really saw and talked with beings from another world; nor can we blame him for relating to his followers what he himself believed to be the truth. In after years the monks, during their struggle with the clergy, were only too glad to exalt their champion Dunstan into a saint by adding more wonders to these stories. They also took advantage of the credulity of the common people, to make them believe that Dunstan saw and knew more than any ordinary man, and was peculiarly favoured by Heaven.

I have already told you that up to this time the clergy were

allowed to marry whenever they chose, and the monks also were frequently married men and had families. Most of the Irish monks of the monastery of Glastonbury had wives. Dunstan, having fallen in love with a young Saxon lady at King Athelstane's court, was most anxious to follow their example. Unfortunately at this juncture he applied for advice to his kinsman Elpege, Bishop of Winchester. Elpege strenuously upheld the peculiar notion which the Popes had begun everywhere to encourage, that it was sinful for any priest to think of marrying, although we are told in the Bible that several of the Apostles were married men, and St. Paul says, "marriage is honourable in all," and speaks of bishops having wives. Dunstan's better feelings seem at first to have been shocked by this new idea; but the wily bishop, seeing the advantage that would accrue to the cause if a clever, energetic man like Dunstan were secured on his side, prevailed on him to go and study at a monastery in France, where the Benedictine rule, as it was called, was most strictly observed, and where none of the monks were allowed to marry. Dunstan soon became convinced of the truth of this new system, and threw himself into the cause with all the energy of his heart and soul.* On his return to England he regarded his former love for the fair lady as an unholy passion, and bidding a final adieu to her, spent the rest of his days labouring with all the powers of his mind and body to establish the monastic system in its new form in opposition to the plan which had hitherto prevailed. Dunstan soon obtained favour with Edmund, the Saxon King then reigning, who appointed him as his chaplain, or private priest, and gave him the old Abbey of Glastonbury to restore, making him at the same time Abbot.

It is much to be regretted that the new Abbot, in his mistaken zeal for what he considered the true cause, should have turned out all the good Irish monks, and put followers of his own into their places. At the same time we must in justice give him credit for rebuilding the stately church, and spending a great deal of his own money in improving the monastery, which he further converted into a large and most useful public school. We almost always find that those men who become reformers, as Dunstan did, and try to set things to rights, are very apt to run into extremes, and their followers still more so. When once the tide is turned, it is almost impossible to stem the current; and although, like Dunstan, their intentions may be good, they often defeat their own ends by going further than is either prudent or right.

* Dr. Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops*, vol. i. chap. 7.

The monastic cause was now strengthened by the powerful support of Odo, Archbishop of Canterbury. Odo was the son of a Dane of noble birth, and had been converted to Christianity in early youth by the preaching of a good missionary, who collected a crowd of listeners round him by chanting the Psalms of David. Exiled, as a mad enthusiast, from his father's house, he clung to the new faith with all the energy of a martyr, glorying to suffer for Christ's cause.

In those days of warfare and bloodshed, even bishops thought that to fight in defence of their country was by no means inconsistent with their holy calling. They took up arms against men who were heathen, whose aim was to destroy not only their liberty but their religion also. Odo was famous for the courage with which he wielded his sword. There is a story told of this warrior bishop, how he saved the good King Athelstane's life in battle. The King was engaged in the hottest part of the field in a hand-to-hand encounter with one of the enemy, when his sword broke off at the hilt, and left him at the mercy of his foe. Odo was at hand: he sprang forward, and gave the King a weapon he had snatched from one of the dead bodies with which the field was strewn. Athelstane made good use of this timely gift; but it was to Odo's promptness and courage that the King owed his life. This was the man that Dunstan afterwards recommended to King Edmund as a fit person to fill the vacant primacy of Canterbury. Odo had studied at the same monastery in France where Dunstan had spent part of his youth, and had returned to England, like his friend, a firm adherent to the monastic rule. As the friendship of these two energetic men increased, you may imagine the cause of the poor married clergy had but little chance against such powerful opponents. Archbishop Odo's first act was to restore the fine old cathedral of Canterbury; and as he seems to have been an eloquent and powerful preacher, the church was thronged with people. I cannot help thinking that Odo carried too much of his warlike temper into holy matters, and the cruelty which flowed in the blood of all the Danes comes out at times in his character. He ejected, without hesitation and without remorse, all married clergy from the cathedrals and monasteries, and, fired with a mistaken zeal, was by no means scrupulous in the means he employed to gain his end.

I wonder if you remember reading the sad history of the young Saxon King Edwy and his Queen. It is so connected with the history of Dunstan and Odo, that I will briefly relate the circumstances to you. When you have heard it I am sure you will not be surprised that the young King should have

hated Dunstan and his cause. Edwy greatly loved his young and beautiful cousin Elgiva, and determined, notwithstanding the threats of Dunstan and the Archbishop, on making her his wife, although the Pope thought fit to declare that marriage between cousins was a deadly sin. The wedding was solemnized in secret. Shortly afterwards the young King was crowned in state by Odo, and at the conclusion of the ceremony, he adjourned to the banqueting-hall, where Dunstan was present among the other guests. In those rude Saxon times, a great deal of noisy rioting and drinking accompanied these entertainments, and Edwy, yearning for the gentle society of his wife, made his escape from the scene of revelry and hastened to Elgiva's bower. Dunstan's fiery temper was roused by what he considered a gross insult to those present, and rushing into the Queen's apartment, he dragged the young King by main force from her arms, and compelled him to take his place again at the table. Edwy never forgave the affront, and Dunstan and Odo became his bitter enemies. This is a rough and startling story, doubtless, for our polished age to dwell upon, but those Saxon times were rude and rough, and we have no right to judge the characters of those days without taking this fact into consideration.

The end of the story of poor Edwy and Elgiva is sadder than its beginning, and is a mournful proof of the terrible effect of religious zeal carried to excess. Odo pronounced a sentence of divorce between the King and Queen, but Edwy proudly resisted, and when his wife was torn from his arms, by order of the ruthless Prelate, he tried, but in vain, to enable her to return. Her cruel enemies branded her in the face, hoping thus to destroy her beauty, but recovering from her wounds, she was hastening to rejoin her husband, when she was stopped at Gloucester, and cruelly murdered by the Saxon mob. Edwy, her disconsolate husband, died shortly after, broken-hearted. Sad as is the idea this story gives us of the cruelty of those unsettled times, it is a relief to find that Archbishop Odo died four months before the young Queen's murder; so we dare not accuse him, as some modern writers have done, of encouraging a deed so utterly unworthy of a minister of God.

CHAPTER XX.

DUNSTAN BECOMES ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—HIS WISE AND POLITIC CONDUCT—HIS LAST SERMON AND DEATH—HIS CHARACTER—ETHELRED'S UNHAPPY REIGN—MASSACRE OF THE DANES—THEIR FEARFUL VENGEANCE—SIEGE AND SACK OF CANTERBURY—ARCHBISHOP ELPEGE'S BRAVERY AND GOODNESS—HIS MARTYRDOM—DEPLORABLE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

[A.D. 959—1012.] BEFORE the sad events recorded in my last chapter had taken place, Dunstan, powerful as he was, had been banished the kingdom by order of Edwy, but shortly before the King's death he returned to England, and, as the chief friend and adviser of Edgar, the brother of Edwy,* he became daily more and more powerful.

It is but justice to this great man to state, that he seems to have felt considerable remorse for his rough treatment of young Edwy, although that King had shown himself his sworn enemy, and had himself been the means of the Abbot's banishment. Dunstan's prosperity was now at its height. He accepted the two bishoprics of Worcester and London, and not long after, he was further raised to the primacy of Canterbury. In this important post he found full scope for his power and energy.

Edgar, from all accounts, was a wild unprincipled youth; he cared but little for the prosperity of his kingdom, entrusting all matters of importance to Dunstan, that he might be at liberty to spend his time in rioting and amusement. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that Edgar's reign was a glorious one for England, and as we have seen the King himself took little or no interest in public matters, we must in common justice give the Archbishop credit for the flourishing condition of the country. Dunstan was a courageous man, and when the King had committed a very sinful act, he openly reproved him. On a certain public occasion, Edgar as usual offered him his hand, which the Archbishop refused to take, saying, "I can no longer remain the friend of one who has made Almighty God his enemy." Edgar, fearing to offend so powerful an ally, submitted quietly to the penance Dunstan commanded. We cannot but regret that instead of telling the King he must give up his sins, and ask God's pardon and forgiveness for the past, Dunstan should have allowed him to think that mere outward acts of penance, such as "fasting," or watching night and day in the church, could wash out his sins in God's sight. As it was, Edgar's

* Edwy was not yet dead, but shared the kingdom with his brother. He died shortly after Dunstan's return, and then Edgar became sole sovereign of England.

heart still remained impure, and when the appointed time of penance was over, he returned once more to his old evil ways. Dunstan, however, performed his duty well, as ruler of the kingdom. The Danes were in a great measure subdued, the navy improved and increased, and justice was wisely administered. Dunstan survived Edgar, who died in the year 975, but he was now an old man; and although he lived nearly thirteen years longer, his power and influence were on the decline, and he met with much opposition from the other party, who had espoused the cause of the married clergy.

You have heard of the miserable state of England during the reign of Ethelred the Unready, as he is called, and the dreadful havoc made by the Danes. During the first few years of the young King's reign, Dunstan was the chief ruler, and affairs were in a more hopeful condition, but at his death in 988 the state of the kingdom was very gloomy. Dunstan preached his last sermon on Ascension Day, but he was so weak that he had to retire several times from the pulpit during his discourse. "He spoke of our Lord's love in saving mankind, and dilated in fervent words on the bliss of heaven, exhorting his hearers to ascend in their hearts to that blessed place, whither their Saviour had gone before. With affectionate words he bade them remember him when he was gone, as he felt this must be the last time he could address them."* On the following Saturday he expired (after receiving the Holy Communion), uttering these beautiful words of praise: "Glory to Thee, Almighty Father, who hast provided for them that love Thee the bread of life, that we may ever be mindful of Thy wonderful mercy in sending to us Thine only-begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary: glory to Thee, O heavenly Father, for when we were not, Thou didst give unto us existence, and when we were sinners, Thou didst grant unto us a Saviour: glory to Thee, through the same thy Son, our Lord and God, who with Thee and the Holy Ghost dost govern all things, world without end."

Before we proceed, let us dwell for a little time on the character of this great man. Whatever opinion we form of Dunstan, he was certainly the most remarkable man of his age. Although we may find fault with many of his actions, and although we may think that the means he employed to gain his ends were often unlawful, we must confess that he had the good of his country at heart. At the time he lived, great ignorance for the most part prevailed among the people, so that they were easily led to believe any ridiculous story or wonder that they

* Dr. Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops*, vol. i. p. 421.

might hear related ; and Dunstan, eager to advance his cause, which he believed to be the true one, took perhaps undue advantage of this feeling. The marvellous visions he fancied he had seen, during his attack of delirium, were all made to impress and influence the minds of the people, who soon began to regard him as something more than mortal, and the cause for which he struggled was looked upon as the cause of Heaven. Again, we cannot but blame the unwise zeal Dunstan showed in compelling the people to adopt the Benedictine rule, which I told you was quite a new thing in England. I am sure Dunstan could never have foreseen the evil that would arise from the extreme strictness of the rules he enforced on the monks. Before his time, any one wishing to live in a monastery could afterwards leave it if he felt so disposed : now he had, on entering the monastery, to make a solemn vow before God never to quit the spot on pain of losing eternal life ; he was allowed to receive no presents, and all his property belonged henceforth to the monastery. At first, children educated in the monastery, as they grew up, were permitted and even encouraged to become monks, but were never compelled to do so against their will ; but under the new rule parents might dedicate their children to a monastic life, and oblige them against their will to take Orders. We know that an unwilling service, such as theirs must have been, could have found but little favour in God's sight.

Now that I have pointed out the defects in Dunstan's conduct, let us try and remember some of the good traits in his character. He appears to have been deeply read in the Holy Scriptures, and he persuaded King Edgar to send at his own expense copies of the Bible to the different churches for the instruction of the people, and to publish a code of laws full of wisdom and justice. Dunstan was an admirable preacher ; crowds flocked to listen to his eloquent and fluent sermons, for he was a clever man, and famous for his success in argument. Like Wilfrid, he everywhere encouraged the building of churches and monasteries, and was most clever himself at carving in stone and carpentering, besides being able to illuminate or paint manuscripts in the most beautiful manner.

Dunstan was a man of powerful will, strong energy, and possessed a very hasty temper ; and although we find that he agreed with the Pope in many of his false notions, he cared no more for his authority than he did for the King's. Before we take leave of this great man, I will just mention one or two of the good rules he made for his clergy. First, he ordered "that no priest should interfere with another in anything that con-

cerned his parish or church, or any of the things that belonged to him. That every Christian man diligently win his child to Christianity, and teach him the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and that men on holy days forbear heathenish songs and diabolical sports. That people abstain on Sundays from markets and business. That all things belonging to the Church be cleanly and decently ordered, and that priests preach to the people on Sundays, and always set them a good example."

I have already told you that Ethelred's reign was a very sad one for England. In the year 989 Siric became Archbishop of Canterbury, and the cowardly advice he gave the King with regard to the Danes proved of infinite harm to the nation. Instead of meeting the enemy, as Dunstan had advised, with promptness and energy, he persuaded Ethelred to bribe them with large sums of money to retire. As you may imagine, this plan made them the more eager to advance, and the ravages they committed were terrible. I have already told you that many of the Danes gave up their roving habits, and settled in different parts of the conquered country, where some of them became the guests of the Saxons, and lived in their families. It was about the year 1002 that Ethelred planned and executed a most horrible deed. He secretly commanded the murder of all those Danes who had settled peaceably in the country. Can we wonder that a deed so full of treachery and cruelty was visited by God with a signal retribution? The Danes, burning with vengeance, collected all their forces, and attacking the country at all points, spread death and desolation wherever they came. At this juncture the good Elpege, a man greatly respected for his holy and consistent life, was raised to the See of Canterbury. The people now hoped for better times; but Elpege, holy as he was, could not restrain the fury of the heathen Danes, and when they appeared before the walls of the ancient city of Canterbury, all he could do was to remain nobly at his post, and by his example encourage his people to face death like Christians. When advised to fly, he exclaimed, "God forbid that I should tarnish my character by so inglorious an action, and be afraid to go to heaven because a violent death may lead me there." For twenty days the citizens, encouraged by the example of this brave man, successfully defended their beloved city from the enemy. Every day the good Archbishop knelt with his people in the cathedral, and animated them to fresh energy. He reminded them of the fortitude of the early martyrs, how they had held out under torture, and triumphed over the malice of their enemies. Alas! all their faith was needed to bear up against the horrors of their position: the city was betrayed, and

the bloody work of massacre began. The ruthless pagans spared neither sex nor age; women were tortured and murdered, and little children thrown under the wheels of the passing waggons, or tossed in the air upon the points of pikes. The venerable Archbishop, groaning with anguish at the dreadful scene, bravely advanced in front of the enemy, hoping to awe them by his calm bearing and earnest words. "Blemish not your manhood," he cried, "by destroying defenceless women and innocent babes, but wreak your vengeance on an old man, who is in a high position, and whose death may possibly bring you some renown." Instead of listening to his words, the Danes seized Elpege, and after compelling him to witness the burning of the noble cathedral, and the murder of all his monks, they kept him in close confinement, hoping to obtain a large ransom for his release. Gladly would the people have offered any sum in their power to save him, but the good old man refused to receive their offerings, saying that at such a time of misery as this they had no right to rob either the Church or the country of money for his sake. Enraged and disappointed, the cruel Danes, while engaged in a drunken revel, ordered the Archbishop to be brought out, and barbarously slew him with the bones that remained after their feasting was over. Elpege was a true martyr; he died for the sake of his religion and his God: and he was a true patriot also; he fought for his country while he was able, and cheerfully endured a cruel death rather than allow his Church and people to suffer. Doubtless during this season of misery and distress the Saxons prayed with all their hearts to God for help; we are told that the third Psalm, beginning, "Lord! how are they increased that trouble me," was ordered to be chanted in their churches, and a fresh sentence added to the litany, which gives us a vivid idea of the terror inspired by their heathen foes, "That it may please thee to quell the cruelty of our pagan enemies. We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord."*

* Churton's Early English Church, p. 233.

CHAPTER XXI.

FLIGHT OF ETHELRED AND HIS FAMILY INTO NORMANDY—HIS SON EDMUND IRONSIDES DIVIDES THE KINGDOM WITH THE DANISH KING CANUTE—CANUTE'S HOLINESS AND WISDOM—HIS WISE POLICY WITH REGARD TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ENGLAND—ARCHBISHOP ETHELNOTH—HE RESTORES CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL—LADY GODIVA—EDWARD THE CONFESSOR—HIS FAVOUR TO THE NORMANS—THE NORMAN CONQUEST—CONCLUSION.

[A.D. 1012—1066.] THE Danes under their leader Sweyn now made such advances that Ethelred with his wife and two sons basely deserted their country, and took refuge in Normandy. So great was the power of the Danes, that on Sweyn's death, his son, the celebrated Canute, was proclaimed by his party King of England. Ethelred was afterwards prevailed on to return, and after fighting several bloody battles with Canute, ended his troubles and life in the year 1016. His son Edmund Ironsides was a brave prince, and determined if possible to secure the crown for himself; but he appears to have shrunk from exposing his poor subjects to so many deadly encounters. There is a quaint story told by an old writer, of how Edmund proposed to Canute that they should decide the matter by single combat, "that their hands might not be stained with the blood of so many of their faithful subjects." Canute, however, refused the encounter altogether, saying, with considerable self-conceit, "Although my courage is great, I dare not trust my small person against so bulky an antagonist as thyself; therefore let us divide the country, and remain at peace."* Fortunately, this wise, though cautious proposition was accepted; but Edmund dying shortly afterwards, Canute became sole sovereign of England, and in order to conciliate the Saxons he married Emma, the widowed Queen of Ethelred. As you have read the history of England, I need hardly remind you that Canute had already become a Christian. His conversion was thorough and sincere: few characters show more completely the softening influence of the Christian faith, and its superiority over the heathen religion of the Danes. Like St. Paul, Canute had formerly taken delight in persecution and cruelty of all kinds, but shortly after the blessed change had taken place, he set his subjects a noble example of wisdom, humility, and gentleness. Assisted by the good Archbishop Ethelnoth, who was his most intimate friend and companion, and a Saxon by birth, he enacted many good and just laws, and gained the confidence of both Danes and Saxons by the wise policy he displayed.

* William of Malmesbury, p. 195.

Equal justice was meted out to both parties, and the Saxons were conciliated in many ways; his efforts were rewarded by a reign of peace and prosperity; war no longer desolated the country, for Danes and Saxons had become one nation. I am sure you will be glad also to learn that Canute encouraged the married clergy, and tried to subdue the power of the monks. Archbishop Ethelnoth, his friend, was himself a secular clergyman, and as there appears to have been no opposition whatever to his appointment, it looks as if Canute managed this matter with his usual wisdom and moderation. We cannot help feeling very sorry that Canute's wise policy was not followed by future sovereigns, since under the Norman kings the monks finally prevailed, and long years of error and oppression followed, which I am sure the free spirit of the Anglo-Saxon would never have endured, had they not been overpowered, and in time united with their more polished but servile Norman conquerors. We are told that Canute repaired throughout England the monasteries,* which had been partly destroyed by the Danes under himself or his father. He built churches in all the places where he had fought, and appointed clergy to minister in them. Meanwhile Archbishop Ethelnoth, we are told, "encouraged the King in all his good actions, and restrained him in his excesses." There is an interesting letter still existing which Canute wrote to his friend Ethelnoth, while he was absent on a journey to Rome. Anxious for the welfare of his people, Canute had visited that city in the hope of bringing back some good rules for their benefit. After speaking of the gracious manner in which he had been received, he adds, "Be it known to you all that I have vowed to God Himself henceforward to reform my life in all things, and justly and piously to govern the kingdoms and the people subject to me, and have determined, through God's assistance, to make amends for anything hitherto unjustly done, either through the intemperance of my youth, or through negligence; therefore I call to witness and command my counsellors to whom I have entrusted the care of my kingdom, that they, by no means, either through fear of myself, or favour to any powerful person, suffer henceforth any injustice, or cause such to be done in all my kingdom."† We may be sure that the good Archbishop saw that these wise injunctions were carried out.

Among other good things Ethelnoth restored Canterbury Cathedral. This church, as you may imagine, was associated in the minds of the people with all that was most sacred and ancient in the history of their religion; and greatly they must

* William of Malmesbury, p. 198.

† Ibid., p. 202.

have rejoiced to see it rise again from its ruins. Ethelnoth also caused the remains of the martyr Elpege to be decently interred under its holy roof. He shortly after died, A.D. 1038, having survived his friend and sovereign three years.

I wonder if you have ever read our poet Tennyson's fine verses on the story of the Lady Godiva; the record of the noble deed she performed for the citizens of Coventry has been handed down to us by their grateful descendants ever since the days of King Canute; it is interesting to know that Archbishop Ethelnoth was this lady's intimate friend,* and can we wonder that the same Christian spirit which inspired him animated her also? Lady Godiva and her husband Earl Leofric built many monasteries; the monastery at Coventry had been destroyed by the Danes; this the "grim Earl" rebuilt, and decorated it at his own expense with a great many costly ornaments. The church at Stow in Lincolnshire was also probably built by them: parts of it still remain, which clearly belong to this early age.†

We are now at the conclusion of our history of the early days of the English Church, approaching a period when another great change takes place. The two sons of Canute reigned but a few years, and Edward the Confessor, the son of Ethelred, who, you remember, had taken refuge in Normandy, became king. Both Danes and Saxons seem to have agreed in inviting him over, although by this act they were preparing the way for what at first sight seemed a dire calamity for their country. Edward was by birth a Norman; his early life had been spent among foreigners, and all his interest centred in the Norman party; we cannot therefore be surprised at his showing favour to those Norman clergy who had instructed him, and under whose influence he had been brought up. He created Robert, a Norman monk, Archbishop of Canterbury, and raised another Norman to the see of London. All this of course caused a good deal of jealousy among the English, but on the whole the reign of Edward was a peaceable one for our country.

The name of Edward the Confessor will ever be associated in the minds of Englishmen with the building of Westminster Abbey. This ancient and noble edifice was consecrated in the year 1065, only a few days before the King's death. After the year 1000, stone monasteries and churches seem quite to have taken the place of the wooden buildings raised by the Saxons. We are told that in England, as well as in France and Italy, "nearly all the bishops' seats, churches, and monasteries, were

* Dr. Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, vol. i., p. 481.

† Parker on *Gothic Architecture*, p. 17.

changed for better ones, and the world seemed putting off its old dingy attire, and putting on a new robe.”*

We have seen how active Canute was in the good work of building and restoring churches: those he erected were of stone. But under the Norman kings, architecture, as you will see by-and-by, improved rapidly, and the most beautiful and costly churches arose throughout the land. The Saxons do not appear to have excelled much in this respect; even Westminster Abbey was built by Norman architects, and under its ancient roof the sovereigns of England, from the time of Edward the Confessor to the present day, have always been crowned.

It is here quite needless for me to dwell upon the great event which decided the fate of the last of the Anglo-Saxon kings. I am sure you have read many times in your History the story of the death of Harold, the brave son of Earl Godwin, on the bloody field of Hastings. William, Duke of Normandy, and cousin of Edward the Confessor, ascended the throne; and henceforth Britons, Anglo-Saxons, Danes, and Normans, became one nation. You may be sure, however, that a great change like this could not be effected without much misery and heart-burning; but if you have carefully followed me through this part of my History, you will have seen how God in past times preserved the English Church in safety through the greatest perils. And though a dark cloud of error and superstition hung over her for a time, God overruled all for the ultimate benefit of His people.

In reading the past history of Christianity in England, we have every reason to thank God for preserving His truth, and for handing it down to us through so many ages. And while we confidently pray “that God will continue to cleanse and defend His Church, and preserve it evermore by His help and goodness,”† may we as members of this Church do all in our power to influence others in its favour by leading holy and consistent lives, that God’s blessing may continue to rest upon it for evermore.

* Parker on Gothic Architecture, p. 17.

† Collect for Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Part II.



PREFACE.

It is necessary that the second part of this work should be accompanied by a few words of explanation.

I have preferred making the book progressive, and have therefore divided it into two parts. The first, which is suited to the capacities of young children, should be read over carefully several times before the second part is entered upon, which is adapted to young persons from the ages of twelve to sixteen. The subjects brought forward in the second part are necessarily more advanced, and require a more mature mind to grasp them. Yet I have preferred keeping the language as simple as possible, not only because I believe it renders the style more forcible, but because I have found from experience that difficult subjects, such as remarks on religious doctrine, &c., can be made intelligible even to a child, if clothed in plain and simple language. At the same time I have endeavoured to combat some of the popular prejudices which are now so common with regard to the past history of our Church. In order the better to obtain a clear and unbiassed view of the important facts of which I have treated, I have for the most part consulted the old contemporary writers, as well as more modern historians. The passages I have selected from these old writers are quoted exactly as they stand, for the language is so clear, forcible, and simple, that any attempt to alter or remodel the sentences would only be to mar and destroy them. It is to be regretted that the copious histories of Holinshed and Stow, with the smaller biographies of Hayward, Habington, Sir Thomas More, and Cavendish, should be out of the reach of so many, for they are full of quaint, pithy and forcible writing. They present to us the events of their own time in an unvarnished form, and their writings are, for the most part, free from the religious rancour and party prejudices of later times, for they lived before the divisions which now unhappily disgrace

our Church existed. These are some of the reasons which have induced me to take contemporaneous writers for my chief authorities; but the references throughout the book show that I have consulted living authors as well.

I would now only add that my chief endeavour throughout this work has been to show, from historical facts, that the Church of England is not (as we have been too often led to suppose) a distinct body of its own, but that it ever has been, and still is a part of that one Catholic or Universal Church which our Lord and His Apostles founded, and which, as the grain of mustard seed in the parable, has grown "from the least of all seeds," into a mighty "tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

Should this little volume, the defects of which I deeply feel, counteract one false or prejudiced opinion, or be the means of attaching one youthful member of our Church more closely to her divine and Scriptural teaching, I shall feel amply repaid for the thought and research which such a work, however humble, must necessarily entail.

M. C. S. 1867.

CHAPTER I.

WILLIAM I.—1066 to 1087.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS—TYRANNY OF THE NORMAN RULE—NORMANS DESCENDED FROM DANES—THEIR CHARACTER—OPPRESSIVE MEASURES OF THE CONQUEROR—SAXON BISHOPS AND ABBOTS EJECTED, AND NORMANS ELECTED IN THEIR PLACE—ALDRED, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK—WULFSTAN BISHOP OF WORCESTER—HIS BOLD CONDUCT IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY—HIS PIETY AND DEATH—CHANGES BROUGHT UPON THE ENGLISH CHURCH BY THE NORMAN CONQUEST—FORESTERS—MONASTERIES—CITIES OF REFUGE—PROTECTION AFFORDED BY THE CHURCH TO THE ENSLAVED SAXONS—NORMAN CHURCHES.

I KNOW, dear children, you have read with some interest the short account I gave you of the foundation and growth of a Christian Church in our beloved England: I therefore propose continuing this history up to the reign of Queen Mary. It will embrace a period of great interest and importance, and will, I doubt not, furnish us by the way with many useful lessons.

For the sake of convenience, and in order the better to impress the facts upon your memory, I propose taking the reign of each sovereign as it comes, and giving you a history of the Church during that period. Our last chapter closed with a most important event. The battle of Hastings placed the Norman Duke William on the throne of England, and great and startling were the changes which took place. The Normans, unlike the old Danes and Saxons, were Christians, and therefore the conquered people were spared the misery of seeing their Church and religion destroyed. But William the Conqueror was stern and fierce, and in order to establish himself firmly on the throne he resorted to the most cruel and unjust measures, often desolating whole provinces with fire and sword. While the people at large were oppressed, the Saxon bishops and clergy suffered as well. In the course of a few years we find almost all the bishops and abbots Norman, while the worthy Saxons who filled those posts at the time of the Conquest were either dead or had been forcibly removed. The misery caused by this tyrannical and unjust conduct was great. In the first place, the new bishops and clergy spoke an unknown language, so that the services of the Church no longer afforded the same comfort and help to the oppressed people, who longed in vain for the

old times, when they could join heartily in God's service, and listen with reverence to the teachers they had learnt to honour and revere ; for, you remember, most of the Saxon bishops had endeared themselves to their people by the consistency of their daily lives.

It is a fact worthy of notice that the Normans were descended from the old Danes, who, under one of their Sea-kings, Rollo, gained a settlement in Normandy in the reign of our Alfred ; while the descendants of this Rollo reigned as Dukes of Normandy for nearly two hundred years.* This will give us some clue to the character of these Normans. Although a Christian people, they delighted in war. The education of a young Norman noble consisted chiefly in warlike exercises, and they were taught to look with contempt on any man who could not wield his lance or shoulder his crossbow.† War alone was glorious in the eyes of a Norman ; and in order to indulge his favourite propensity, he cared little either for the desolation he caused or for the misery he inflicted. Each man seized for himself all that he could lay hands on, and a spirit of intense selfishness prevailed. William the Conqueror possessed these failings in common with his fellow-countrymen ; but at the same time we find much that is really noble in his character. Though cruel, unscrupulous, and tyrannical, he would listen with the reverence of a child to the man whose character he could respect and love. Happily God, in His wisdom, raised up just such a man. In Archbishop Lanfranc both the King and the conquered Saxons found a true friend.

Before, however, I enter upon the history of this famous man I must give you a short account of the changes which the Norman Conquest wrought in the Church of England. I told you that William, anxious to advance his own people, removed most of the Saxon bishops and abbots, filling their vacant posts with Normans. The conquered people could obtain no redress for this injustice, so their only course was to submit patiently, and trust to God to send brighter times. I told you that William, with all his faults, could respect holiness in any man ; and it is a relief to find that a few of the Saxons, by their wise and upright conduct, gained the esteem of the stern Conqueror, and retained their position to the last. Aldred, Archbishop of York, was one of these. He founded the Bishoprics of Gloucester and Ripon, and by his ability gained the confidence of Edward the Confessor. He wisely counselled his people to submit quietly to the Conqueror's rule ; but that he was no coward is suffi-

* Churton's History of the Early English Church, p. 276.

† Dr. Hook's Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury, vol. ii., p. 7.

ciently proved by the following anecdote : A powerful Norman baron, in order to show his contempt for the Saxons and their religion, dared to begin building a strong castle within the precincts of the Cathedral at Winchester. Aldred hastened to the spot, and fearlessly denouncing the offender, alarmed his conscience, and put a stop to his irreverent attempt.* Aldred did much whilst he lived to curb the Conqueror's fierceness ; but at his death the Saxons, deprived of his wise counsel, made an attempt to rebel. Happily the pious Aldred died before this, so he was spared the mournful sight of his beloved cathedral being burnt to the ground, his people slaughtered by wholesale, and his diocese desolated by famine.

Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, a man of whom Englishmen may well feel proud, and who combined all that was most holy and true in the Anglo-Saxon character, retained his bishopric until his death. I am sure you will be interested in hearing something about this noble-minded man ; particularly as he is the last Anglo-Saxon bishop whose life we have to dwell upon. When Lanfranc became Archbishop of Canterbury, a council was held in Westminster Abbey, when many Saxon bishops and priests were displaced. So unjust were the Conqueror's measures, that mere ignorance of the Norman language was considered a sufficient excuse for depriving the people of those teachers who spoke to them in their own tongue. Wulfstan was present. His life had been pure, and his name was held in high esteem by his countrymen. The only fault his enemies could urge against him was his ignorance of the Norman or French language. He was therefore called upon to give up the pastoral staff which he had received from his master, Edward the Confessor. Conscious of his integrity, he stood forth and addressed the meeting in the following lofty words. Grasping his staff in his hands, he said : " I am not worthy of this dignity, nor equal to its duties. I knew it when the clergy elected me, when the bishops forced it upon me, and my master summoned me to the office ; but you would take from me that staff which you never gave, and that honour which you never conferred. I am ready to obey the decree of this holy council, but I resign the staff, not to you, but to him by whose authority I have received it." Saying these words, he advanced to the tomb of King Edward, and, as if speaking to the dead, he exclaimed : " Master, thou knowest how unwillingly I took upon myself this charge, forced upon me by thy desire, and the consent of the bishops and clergy. Behold, a new people fill the land, a new king is on the throne, a new primate, new laws ;

* Churton, p 280.

they accuse thee of error and me of presumption, in having obeyed. To thee, therefore, I resign the honour I never sought; thou, who art now with God, canst best tell whether in committing it to me thou wast deceived." With these words, Wulfstan laid his crosier upon the tomb, and returned to his seat—a simple monk. The king and council, moved by this noble appeal, willingly listened to the conciliatory advice of Lanfranc, and allowed Wulfstan to retain his see in peace. Lanfranc the Norman and Wulfstan the Saxon remained firm friends ever after.

Now that you have read this story, what pleasure it will give you to go to the ancient Abbey at Westminster, and standing before the tomb of its royal founder, call to mind the spirited scene I have just described, which happened so many hundred years ago. Wulfstan's character was held in high esteem, and his preaching was so earnest and hearty, that crowds flocked to hear him. His reverence for our Lord's character was intense, and his sermons were full of Christ and of His love to men. He encouraged the building of monasteries, and was a great admirer of Venerable Bede, of whom I gave you an account in the first part of this book.

If ever you go to Malvern, in Worcestershire, you must pay a visit to the Abbey Church there, which has lately been beautifully restored. It was founded by the pious Wulfstan, and was in those days surrounded on all sides by dense forests. The foundation still remains, though the building is of later date. He also rebuilt his own cathedral at Worcester. On the day the work was begun, the Bishop was observed by one of his monks sitting moodily in a corner of the churchyard, and sighing deeply from time to time. The monk ventured to expostulate with his master, saying: "Surely you ought to rejoice that such good can be done in your time to your Church, and that buildings now are so much more beautiful and glorious than they were in the time of our fathers." "I cannot think thus," said Wulfstan; "are we not pulling down the labours of holy men, that we may gain honour and reputation for ourselves? In the good old times men knew not how to build magnificent temples; but though they worshipped under mean roofs, their hearts were willingly offered to God. How sad it would be should we neglect the souls of men to pile together stones!"

In some parts of England the heathenish practice of selling men and women as slaves was still continued, although the laws of the Conqueror forbade it. Wulfstan, deeply grieved at this, hastened to Bristol, where the horrid traffic was carried on.

For several months did this good man preach publicly against it, and so fervent were his words, that the citizens wholly abolished the practice. Some time afterwards, a wretch attempting to revive the trade, was seized by the mob, and so roughly handled, that he barely escaped with life.

Wulfstan was a great lover of little children. "How fair," said he, "must the Creator's beauty be, if His creatures are so lovely!" He gained the warm affection of the poor by his charity and kindness, and their respect by his piety and consistency of life. He died at the advanced age of eighty eight, having gained the confidence of both Normans and Saxons.

Before I conclude this chapter, I must say a few words more about the changes brought by the Norman Conquest upon the English Church. A great revolution in any country is always accompanied by infinite misery; but, as I have already told you, God's loving hand may be traced even in the darkest events. For a time the condition of the conquered people was sad; indeed, many of the Saxons fled to other countries, or banding together, took refuge in the thick woods which abounded at that time in England. Now that the trees in our country have nearly all been cut down to make room for cornfields, it is difficult to understand the security which these natural fortresses afforded. In a wood so thick as in many parts to exclude daylight, a narrow pathway was cut; the felled trees formed a kind of barricade across the path, and thus a handful of Saxons, well acquainted with the country, could hold at bay a considerable army of Normans. Of course the sympathies of the common people were all on the side of the Saxon warriors, and proud were they to supply, with food and necessities, men whom they justly regarded as patriots and heroes. We are glad to find these foresters were not deserted by their priests, who, in this dense solitude, administered to their flock the consolations of religion. In past days the monasteries were the chief means, under God, of preserving the Christian faith through a period of extreme danger. Like the cities of refuge you read of in the fourth chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, they afforded a safe retreat to the oppressed Saxons, who could fly thither from the cruelty of their enemies, and be at peace.*

It is needless for me to recur again to the benefit these monasteries conferred on the people during the time of war and oppression; even the lawless Norman dared not violate the sanctity of these holy retreats, for though he feared not man, the wrath of God he dared not brave. Happy was it for the

* Dr. Hook, vol. ii., p. 18.

conquered nation that the laws of the Church were honoured while other laws were disregarded. The Norman baron, when uninfluenced by Christianity, regarded his serf as a mere chattel, to be used only for his own advantage, as he could use his horse or his mule; but the opinion of the Church and monastery was far otherwise. All powerful must this homily of the time have been in protecting the unhappy Saxon serf: "Christian men are brothers, whether high or low, noble or ignoble, lord or slave; the wealthy is not better, on that account, than the needy; the slave might as boldly call God his Father as the king. We are all alike before God, unless any one excel another in good works."* Noble words these, and worthy to be held in all honour, breathing, as they do, the spirit of the Bible and of Christianity.

Then, as now, the Church kept certain days holy, in remembrance of those blessed martyrs and saints who died for Christ's sake, and who are held up in Scripture for our example. The lord of the castle could compel his serf to toil any number of hours, but on a saint's day the Church required him to release his victim. I imagine the relief it must have afforded the toil-worn man to enter the precinct of the friendly monastery; to feel that the kind monks regarded him as a brother, and to join in the imposing service of the sacred abbey church. Every thing was done then to render the service of God attractive to the poor and ignorant. As the organ pealed through the lofty aisles, and the procession of monks and choristers, gorgeously robed, wound up the nave, chanting as they went, can we doubt that the heart of the poor oppressed man found comfort? It is to be regretted that the service should have been in Latin, as the serf could not understand it; but for a time at least he could lay aside his cares, and listen with reverence while the praises of God were being sung.

Before I conclude this long chapter, I must just mention one good thing introduced by the Normans. You remember that with few exceptions all the Saxon churches were built of wood; for the Saxons, as a rule, knew but little of church building. The Normans, on the contrary, were well skilled in this noble art; and what was better, each workman took a real interest in it himself, and worked with hearty good-will; this was the true secret of their success. All the old churches were rebuilt, and numbers of new ones erected, in a style so substantial, that most of our cathedrals and many of our parish churches at this distant period bear testimony to the energy and skill of our *Norman ancestors*. Whenever you see round massive pillars,

* Dr. Hook, "Alfric's Homily," vol. ii., p. 19.

often of unusual size, and round arches ornamented with a kind of zigzag device, you may be sure that that part of the building was erected in Norman times. The nave of Gloucester Cathedral is a noble specimen of this style.

CHAPTER II.

WILLIAM I.—1066 to 1087.

LANFRANC—HIS POPULARITY AND WISDOM—OPENS A SCHOOL AT AVRANCHES—HIS SUDDEN CONVERSION—RESIDENCE AT THE MONASTERY OF BEC—HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH HERLUIN THE ABBOT—HIS FAME—STORY OF HIS FIRST ACQUAINTANCE AND QUARREL WITH DUKE WILLIAM—THEIR RECONCILIATION—MADE ABBOT OF ST. STEPHENS—ODO, BISHOP OF BAYEUX—LANFRANC'S PROMOTION TO THE SEE OF CANTERBURY—DIFFICULTIES AND TRIALS—HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE CONQUEROR—THEIR PATRIOTIC RESISTANCE TO THE POPE—LANFRANC'S CONCILIATORY POLICY—STORY OF THE MONKS OF GLASTONBURY.

LANFRANC, our first Norman Archbishop of Canterbury, was in almost every respect well worthy of the honourable post to which he was called. An Italian by birth, he was, at an early age, the admiration of his countrymen by his singular talent as a public speaker. "As he grew older, his opinions," we are told, "were given with so much wisdom, that learned doctors, prelates, and judges of his native city readily adopted them." For some reason Lanfranc determined on leaving his own country, and in the year 1039 he settled at Avranches, in Normandy, where he opened a school, and soon became famous, far and wide, for his eloquence and learning. But admired and sought after as Lanfranc was, he had hitherto failed to secure that true peace of mind which "the world can neither give nor take away." Though a Christian by name, the spirit and doctrines of Christianity were almost unknown to him. But God, in His wisdom, thought fit to change his heart; and although we seldom find very sudden conversion in the end deep or lasting, it appears to have been so in the case of Lanfranc. The story is this: One morning his pupils assembled as usual, but their master was nowhere to be found; a deep trouble had made Lanfranc think seriously of his state before God, and he had determined to devote the remainder of his life to his Maker's service. Fired by a new and sudden impulse, he started off alone in quest of some monastery where he could find rest for his troubled soul. While wandering in *the forest, he was attacked by robbers, who stripped him of his clothes and left him bound to a tree to perish.* In this pitiable

state, Lanfranc poured out his heart in fervent prayer. God answered it. In the morning, his cries for help were heard by some travellers, who were passing along the road at a little distance off. By their aid he found his way to the monastery of Bec, which consisted only of a few rude huts, but surrounded by carefully cultivated fields and gardens. Herluin, the Abbot of this monastery, was a good man, who, weary of the pleasures and vices of the time, and unable to find a monastery entirely free from corruption, had founded this one himself, hoping to spend the rest of his days in serving God by prayer and meditation. The Abbot was hard at work, building a bakehouse for his monks, when Lanfranc approached. Little did he think that the abject man before him, who begged to be allowed to take his place in the monastery as a simple monk, was the renowned teacher of Avranches. We have seen that Lanfranc was a man of unusual learning and ability, admired and sought after by all; his humility in consenting to become an unknown monk in an obscure monastery is therefore the more remarkable. But his life of devotion and active usefulness in the monastery of Bec was of infinite service to him. A warm friendship ever existed between Lanfranc and the good Abbot, which proved of real benefit to both. Herluin imparted to Lanfranc what he so much needed—a true knowledge of the spirit and meaning of God's word; while Lanfranc taught Herluin and the monks much that was useful to them in the way of learning. Lanfranc spent three years happily in this quiet retreat; but he was better suited for an active public life than for a retired devotional one, and as he had proved himself so humble and indifferent to worldly honour, it soon pleased God to exalt him.

The former friends of Lanfranc soon discovered his retreat, and flocked in numbers to place themselves under their beloved master. The few poor huts erected by Herluin were soon filled to overflowing. More were added: but still the numbers increased. Lanfranc longed to found a new monastery, but the humble Abbot shrunk from the fame thus forced upon him. For a long time he held to his own opinion; but the superior wisdom of Lanfranc at length prevailed, and a larger monastery was formed. You will be glad to hear that the good Herluin still continued to hold his office of Abbot, while Lanfranc became Prior. A pleasant sight it must have been to see the learned Prior and the humble-minded Abbot working together, with loving hearts, in God's service. Different men have different gifts; but God calls all—learned and unlearned, rich and poor, old and young—to work in His vineyard.

I have given you this short account of the monastery of Bec, because it afterwards became one of the most important monasteries in Europe, and because to it we are indebted for no less than three of our Archbishops of Canterbury.*

I will now give you an account of the manner in which William, Duke of Normandy, became acquainted with the Prior of Bec. The story is sufficiently amusing, and gives a good insight into the manners of the times. William had lately married Matilda, daughter of the Earl of Flanders. The Church objected to the match, on the ground that the noble couple were too nearly related. Lanfranc threw himself with ardour into the cause of the Church, violently opposing the Duke's claim. William's generosity is to be applauded. Although Lanfranc stood forth as his opponent, the Duke admired his learning and eloquence, and determined to show him all honour. Accordingly, he sent his chaplain and a body of his courtiers to pay their respects to Lanfranc at the monastery; but the Prior, with his characteristic independence, treated the Duke's party with contempt, and exposed the chaplain's ignorance to the assembled monks. Can we be surprised that the proud Norman Duke fell into a paroxysm of rage, when his discomfited people returned? He vowed vengeance on the monastery and its insolent Prior, and commanded him instantly to depart from his dominions. The story of the reconciliation of these two great men is quaint enough. Up to this time the monastery only possessed one poor horse, which unfortunately had become lame. Upon this animal Lanfranc mounted, and, attended by only one servant, prepared to meet the Duke as he started for the chase. William expected to see the Prior gorgeously arrayed, attended by a considerable body of followers. The Duke was a great lover and judge of horses, and as Lanfranc approached on his halting steed, his surprise and amusement were intense. With true tact, the Prior saw his advantage. "My liege," said he, "I obey your mandate; but I must needs leave your dominions a-foot, unless you furnish me with a better horse." William's anger had flown, and, bursting into a loud laugh, he exclaimed: "Who ever heard of a culprit asking his judge to make him a present?" By this harmless jest was the quarrel healed, and a man of energy gained over to the Duke's cause. Happily for England, the friendship of these great men continued without interruption until death separated them. Lanfranc went to Rome, and obtained from the Pope his sanction to the union of William with his cousin, on condition that they should build and endow two abbeys and four

* *Dr. Hook's Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, vol. ii., p. 87.

hospitals—a curious way, you will say, of making amends for what was considered in those days a crime; but the abbeys and hospitals were erected; and this, at all events, was a good thing. At this long distance of time, it may appear to us inconsistent of Lanfranc to have sided so suddenly and so entirely with Duke William; but we must bear in mind that it was now becoming usual to refer any difficult matter to the Pope; when, therefore, he had decided that the marriage of William and Matilda was lawful, all Lanfranc's scruples were at an end.

The time had now arrived for Lanfranc to leave his much-loved retreat at Bec. The Duke begged him to accept the office of Abbot of St. Stephens (one of the new abbeys he had erected), and into this post Lanfranc was formally installed, with great pomp and ceremony, by the Archbishop of Rouen. People are disposed, in these days, to think that the great men of past ages almost always coveted the highest posts. In most instances this is false. Friendship for his master alone induced Lanfranc to quit the monastery where he had spent so many happy hours, and when the archbishopric of Rouen was offered him, he altogether refused the honour, preferring to follow his studies as simple Abbot of St. Stephens. One of the bravest nobles who fought by William's side at the battle of Hastings was Odo, the Conqueror's half-brother, Bishop of Bayeux. It was no uncommon thing in those days to see Bishops fighting valiantly in the field of battle. But the age was peculiarly a warlike one, and it is no wonder that the clergy shared in the general feeling. William had ejected Stigand, the last Saxon Archbishop, from his see; Odo was the man who it was expected would fill the vacancy. But the Conqueror showed his wisdom and impartiality in overlooking his warlike and worldly brother, and in offering this important post to the man he most respected—Lanfranc. Most reluctantly did this great man accept the high honour thus thrust upon him; for a long time he resisted the entreaties of the King, the Queen, and even his beloved friend Herluin. But William would not relent; Lanfranc dared not show disloyalty, and at length yielded. He was consecrated at Canterbury in August 1070. A more melancholy ceremony could scarcely be imagined. Three years before, the ancient Cathedral had been destroyed by fire, and a great part of the city as well. The citizens had had no heart to repair the damage. Lanfranc was consecrated in an old shed that had been raised on the ruins of the Cathedral; and as he passed along the streets, *attended by only nine Bishops, the Saxons frowned with displeasure on the foreigner who had taken the place of their be-*

loved countryman Stigand. What a contrast was this to the happy, peaceful home Lanfranc had just left! The state of his mind at this time is best described in a letter he wrote to Pope Alexander II.; speaking of the manner in which he had been compelled to accept the see, he adds: "They would not admit my plea, and why should I say more? I gave my consent—I came—I took the burden upon me—and such are the unceasing cares and troubles to which I am daily subjected, such the disturbance of mind caused by parties pulling in different directions—the harrowing cares—the losses, the harshness, the meanness, the sinful conduct which I see and hear around me, such the danger to which I see the Holy Church exposed—that I am weary of my life, and lament that it has been preserved to witness such times." He concludes thus: "I ask your prayers that long life may be granted to my Lord the King of England, and peace from all his enemies; for while he lives we enjoy safety, such as it is; but after his death, neither peace nor any manner of good is likely to befall us."* But Lanfranc was not a man to sit down idly and expend his energies in useless regrets. Difficulties only added fresh impulse to his activity, and nobly did he "put his shoulder to the wheel." First of all, he determined to recover all the money that had been unjustly taken from the See of Canterbury. After Stigand had been suspended, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, who I told you was the King's half-brother, had taken charge of all the property of the see; and for some reason had retained for himself a part of this property. William must have been a lover of justice, or he never would have supported Lanfranc in his proceedings against so powerful a relative. Odo was compelled to restore the money, and Lanfranc nobly expended it in all kinds of good and useful works. He rebuilt his Cathedral with great magnificence. Lanfranc was a strict follower of the rule of St. Benedict, which, you remember, Dunstan was so active in establishing in England; and the clergy and chapter of the Cathedral were all monks, that is unmarried clergy, or "regulars," as they were called.

In 1077, Lanfranc visited for the last time his former home at Bec, Herluin having invited him to consecrate the new abbey church which had been lately erected there. His heart still clung with true affection to the old haunts; and touching is the account we have of his behaviour on that occasion. The Archbishop embraced his old friend with delight, but he would allow no honour to be paid to himself. As in former days, he sat down a *simple monk* among the brethren; lovingly he lingered

* *Dr. Hook's Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, vol. ii., pp. 121-2.

till the last moment in this peaceful retreat. But the hour of parting came. He bade a last adieu to his old friend, and returned once more to his difficult and arduous work. Happily the King and the Archbishop worked most harmoniously together, and when the Pope endeavoured to interfere with the rights of the Crown, Lanfranc sided warmly with his sovereign. The Norman William had been from his youth accustomed to pay respect to the Pope as Bishop of Rome; but it is remarkable with what a patriotic spirit both he and Lanfranc resisted his unlawful claims. It was customary for the Pope, when requiring anything of the King or people, to send a "Legate" or representative to enforce his claim and secure obedience, although, as I have already told you, the Pope had no more right to interfere with the affairs of another country than any other Bishop. The Legate demanded in the name of Pope Gregory the homage of William as a vassal, and an oath of allegiance, together with the money due to the See of Rome called "Peter's Pence." That William treated the first half of this message with considerable contempt is certain from the following abrupt answer; after promising to send the money, he adds: "Homage to thee I have *not* chosen, nor do I choose to do; I never made a promise to that effect; neither do I find that it was ever performed by my predecessors to thine." The money William consented to send the Pope indignantly refused, as the homage was withheld.

Gregory now tried to gain over Lanfranc to his side, and invited him to Rome; but the Archbishop's loyalty to his King was greater than his reverence to the Pope. He refused to go. Gregory threatened to suspend him; but the King and the Archbishop were too strong for him, and the threat fell harmless.* Lanfranc's whole policy was a conciliatory one; he behaved for the most part with fairness and justice to the Anglo-Saxons: you remember how wisely and kindly he acted in the matter of Wulfstan, the good Bishop of Worcester, and doubtless he influenced William in the following matter: There was a noble old abbey at Glastonbury, the ruins of which still stand. At this time the Saxon Abbot had been ejected, to make way for Thurstan, a haughty Norman. The poor monks bore for a time, with Christian forbearance, the tyranny and pride of the new Abbot; but at length their patience was exhausted. The service-book of Gregory the Great, which you remember had been introduced into England by Augustine, was still used in the *monasteries*, and treated with well-deserved reverence by the *monks of Glastonbury*. Thurstan ordered them to give up their

* *Dr. Hook's Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, vol. ii., p. 141.

treasured service-book, and to use instead one composed by a Norman monk. Can you wonder that the Anglo-Saxon spirit of the monks was roused, and that they refused to comply with their Abbot's unreasonable command? Thurstan, in order to enforce obedience, called in the aid of the military; the monks took refuge in the church, and a disgraceful scene of violence ensued; a volley of arrows was discharged, and the poor monks, unable to protect themselves from the armed soldiers, clung to the holy altar for protection. Thurstan rushed forward, and with his own hand killed two of his own monks,—the remainder, roused to desperation, bravely defended themselves with the benches, candlesticks, or anything else they could lay hands on; and the soldiers were driven back. The King, informed of this unseemly revolt, and of the shameful conduct of the Abbot, wisely removed him from his post. In the midst of so much oppression and misery, it is pleasant to find that in this case, at all events, Lanfranc and William did justice to those injured, although they were Saxons.

CHAPTER III.

WILLIAM II.—1087 TO 1093.

DEATH OF THE CONQUEROR—CHARACTER OF WILLIAM RUFUS—DEATH OF LANFRANC—RANULPH, PRIME MINISTER—HIS BAD INFLUENCE OVER WILLIAM—WILLIAM SEIZES THE PROPERTY OF THE CHURCH—HIS SUDDEN ILLNESS AND REMORSE—EARLY LIFE OF ANSELM—HIS REMARKABLE DREAM—DESIRES TO ENTER A MONASTERY—OPPOSITION OF HIS FATHER—PIETY OF HIS MOTHER—HER DEATH—ANSELM BECOMES PRIOR OF BEC IN THE PLACE OF LANFRANC—HIS GENTLENESS AND HOLINESS—ELECTED ABBOT OF BEC ON THE DEATH OF HERLCIN—HIS POPULARITY AND HOSPITALITY—ANSELM VISITS ENGLAND—HIS WANT OF JUDGMENT IN MANAGING THE KING—THE PEOPLE URGE WILLIAM TO ELECT ANSELM AS ARCHBISHOP—THE KING'S INDECISION—HIS ILLNESS—HE CONSENTS TO NOMINATE ANSELM—ANSELM'S UNWILLINGNESS—SINGULAR SCENE—CONSECRATION OF ANSELM IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

You know that in our time when the King or Queen dies, their eldest son now reigns in their stead as a matter of course; but the case was not always so in England. In early Norman times, the reigning sovereign had the power of naming his successor. It so happened, therefore, that the claim of the eldest son was sometimes overlooked. It was so in the case of the Conqueror. On his dying bed he commanded Lanfranc and Wulfstan to *proclaim his second son, William, king after him*. When, therefore, these two good men obeyed the command, we may not

accuse them of disloyalty to the rightful heir, as some modern writers have done.

William II., or William Rufus, as he is generally called, was in most respects a very inferior man to his father. I told you the Normans were naturally a selfish race; William exhibited this trait in his character to a remarkable extent. Cruel and tyrannical, he cared little what misery he inflicted on others, so long as he could gratify his own evil propensities. We can easily imagine that, under such a king as this, the state of the Saxons, and the country generally, was even worse than it had been during the former reign. While Lanfranc lived, William Rufus was kept, to a great extent, under control. This fact shows us what judgment this great man displayed in influencing for good even the most unruly characters. But the Archbishop's course was nearly run. In the year 1089, wearied out with many cares, he retired from public life. Shortly afterwards he was seized with a slight attack of fever. His doctor prescribed a remedy; but the pious Lanfranc refused to swallow the draught until he had received the Holy Communion. This fever proved fatal to him, and he expired on the 24th of May. He was buried in the Cathedral at Canterbury, on the south side of the altar. No trace can be seen of his last resting-place; but, like other great and good men, Lanfranc has left a stamp on the history of our Church which can never be effaced. We generally find that bad and weak sovereigns are easily led by evil advisers. After the death of Lanfranc, William Rufus appointed Ranulph, an unprincipled Norman priest, as his prime minister. This bad man, by flattering the King, and encouraging his vices, gained a complete influence over his mind, and supported him in all manner of oppression and injustice. The property of the Church was seized and used by William for his own purposes.

In the Conqueror's time, when any bishopric became vacant, the Archbishop of Canterbury collected the property of the See, and expended it for the good of the Church and people. But now when a bishop or abbot died, the wealth of the bishopric or abbacy was appropriated by the crown, a small sum only being left.* For three years the See of Canterbury remained vacant. Ranulph had persuaded William not to appoint a new Archbishop at once, in order that he might in the meantime claim the property of the See. This sinful policy of William did infinite harm to the nation. The people were deprived of *their religious* teachers, whilst the money that had been employed chiefly for charitable purposes was now spent by the

* *Collier's Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*, vol. ii., p. 66.

king and his court in all manner of sin and folly.* A writer of the time gives us a sad picture of the state to which the country was reduced. "All military discipline," he says, "being relaxed, the courtiers preyed upon the property of the country people, and consumed their substance, taking the very meat from the mouths of these wretched creatures." "Again," he adds, "men of the meanest condition, or guilty of whatever crime, were listened to, if they could suggest anything likely to be of advantage to the King; and if the robber could promise any money to the sovereign, the halter was at once loosened from his neck." But we are told in the Bible that God's ear is ever open to the cry of His people, and that He will surely behold ungodliness and wrong.

A sudden and dangerous illness attacked William in the midst of his sinful career; and, like most bad men when God's hand is upon them, he was seized with fear and remorse. The injuries he had inflicted upon his Church and people rose up before him, and he determined in some measure to compensate for past injustice by at once appointing a successor to the See of Canterbury.

At this period of our history, certain great men seem to stand forth from the rest; and as the history of our Church centres around them, I cannot do better than give you some account of their lives.

Anselm, the man chosen by William to fill the vacant See, was one of the most remarkable characters of his age. Though a pupil of Lanfranc in the monastery of Bec, he was in most respects very unlike his master. Among the wild scenery of the Alps, the young Anselm passed his happy childhood. His father was of noble birth, but cruel, worldly, and tyrannical; his mother, Ermenberga, a model of patience and piety. Her husband's harshness made her cling more lovingly to her child, whom she tenderly reared in holiness, always setting him a noble example of patient endurance. When quite a child, Anselm had a remarkable dream, which his mother delighted to dwell on and recount. At the summit of one of those lofty mountains at whose feet the boy loved to wander, he fancied he saw the Almighty enthroned. It was harvest-time, but the reapers' around were neglecting their work. Anselm advanced towards God's throne to complain of the idle reapers. Then he heard a gentle voice asking his name. Undaunted, Anselm related to his Heavenly Father all that had happened during his short life, and received a piece of pure white bread, with which he departed, strengthened and refreshed. The child's

* William of Malmesbury, p. 337.

vivid imagination was roused by this singular dream, while his pious mother gladly encouraged him in the notion that a life of sanctity in a monastery was the one God had ordained for him; accordingly, at the age of fifteen, Anselm applied for admission into a convent, but was refused by the good abbot unless he could obtain the consent of both his parents. Like the holy Hannah of old, Ermenberga would gladly have parted with her son, to dedicate him to the service of God, but her husband sternly refused his consent. Anselm begged and entreated, but to no purpose. Soon afterwards he had the misfortune to lose his excellent mother, who, wearied out with a life of care and anxiety, sank peacefully into her grave. Her holy example gone, Anselm for a time gave himself up to all kinds of folly and dissipation. But you must not suppose that the teaching of his beloved mother was thrown away. A few years afterwards, we find him a monk in the monastery of Bec, the history of which I gave you in my last chapter. Lanfranc was then Prior; with his usual good sense, he perceived that Anselm's was no common character, and that he was well fitted to impart to others what he had learnt himself, while his gentleness and patience were likely to render him doubly valuable as a teacher in the monastery. When Lanfranc was appointed Abbot of St. Stephens, Anselm succeeded him in his office, and became Prior of Bec. The students, indignant that so young a man should be placed above them, annoyed him in every possible way. In this case we have proof that Anselm inherited his mother's gentleness and forbearance. A youth of the name of Osbern especially hated Anselm. He became the leader in every act of mischief, encouraging the rest to set their Prior's authority at defiance. Most men would have lost their temper, or punished the offender with severity; but Anselm, by forbearance and kindness, turned a bitter enemy into a faithful friend. Osbern loved and respected the man who could display such Christian charity, and gladly listened to his teaching. That the Prior returned his affection is clear, from the following words in a letter which he afterwards wrote to Lanfranc, when the Archbishop begged that Osbern might be sent to him at Canterbury. "Osbern is so bound in love to my heart, that I feel severely the prospect of being separated from him."* A man like this must surely in the end gain the respect and love of those around him, and Anselm was soon famous for his piety and learning. We are told the monastery of Bec became *the resort not merely of students and learned men, but of the weak, the penitent, the oppressed in spirit, who came in crowds*

* Dr. Hook, vol. ii., p. 177.

to receive spiritual comfort and counsel from one who was regarded a holy man, gentle as well as wise.* Few men could remain entirely humbled under so much admiration. Anselm's character certainly suffered from it. The best men have their failings, and in many of Anselm's after acts we can trace a considerable amount of spiritual pride. On the death of the good Abbot Herluin in 1078, Anselm was elected without opposition to fill his place. For thirty-three years did he remain in this happy retreat. His hospitality was unbounded, and his popularity great. It mattered not who presented himself at the door of the monastery, whether foreigner or native, he was always welcomed, for the door was open night and day. At table the Abbot ate most moderately, caring more for conversation than for food; but he delighted to see those around him making a good meal. From all I have said about Anselm, I think you will agree with me that he was well suited to be Abbot of Bec. I wish I could say the same when he became Archbishop of Canterbury. Though a holy and excellent man in many respects, he was sadly wanting in that tact and humility we see so clearly displayed in the character of Lanfranc. It required a man of extreme energy and wisdom to guide the Church of England at this distracted period, and Anselm was not the man who could deal wisely with a character like William Rufus's, rude, coarse, and unscrupulous as he was.

A short time before William was seized with his dangerous illness, Anselm visited England. The people proposed him to William as a fit person to fill the vacant See of Canterbury. His sanctity was well known, and the fact that he had been the intimate friend of the late Archbishop made William the more anxious to appoint him; for the great service done by Lanfranc to his father was still fresh in the memory of the king. On a certain state occasion, Anselm visited the king in his palace. That William was disposed to treat the future Archbishop with respect, and even with affection, is evident from the manner in which he received him. On hearing of his approach, the King sprang from his seat, hastened to the door, and cordially embracing the friend of Lanfranc, led him into the apartment, and placed him on the right hand of the throne. Doubtless the eyes of all present were turned with extreme interest on those two men, so entirely different in character and appearance. We are told that the King was a strong thick-set man, short, and stout, his complexion florid and his hair yellow; his countenance was open, but his eyes had a peculiar expression in them. Anselm, on the contrary, was thin, and even

* Ordericus Vitalis.

emaciated ; his face full of deep intelligence ; his voice sweet, and his whole countenance expressive of a mind at peace with God. Unfortunately, this holy-minded man never appears to have understood the King's character, or to have made the most of his good points. William, though passionate and headstrong, was not wholly bad ; he was, like his father, open to good influence. You can, I know, recal several instances in this history, of the manner in which heathen and bad men have been led to serve God by the persuasion and example of their Christian teachers. Zeal alone could not have accomplished the difficult task ; tact and judgment were most necessary. Bishop Paulinus converted the Saxon King Edwin to the truth, not by continually reproaching him for his past evil conduct, but by setting him a good example, and wisely watching for a fit opportunity to enforce his teaching. In this respect, Anselm altogether failed, and the interview which began so happily ended in a most unfortunate manner. Anselm desiring to speak with the King alone, the attendants were dismissed, when he instantly began to upbraid William for his past misconduct, forgetting that he was only plain Abbot of Bec, and not yet Archbishop of Canterbury. In this instance the King kept his temper, but he never forgot the affront, and Anselm lost a golden opportunity.

Still the See of Canterbury remained vacant. William was undecided whom to appoint. One of his nobles ventured to remark, that the Abbot of Bec bore as high a character for sanctity as any one. "He lives for God alone," said the courtier, "and earthly wishes he has none." "Indeed," said the King, with a sneer, "no wish, I presume, for the Archbishopric of Canterbury?" "That least of all," was the unwise reply. "If," exclaimed the King, with warmth, "I were to hold out to him the faintest hope of the Archbishopric, he would clasp me by the neck in his gratitude ; but, by the holy face of Lucca, neither he nor any one else shall be Archbishop of Canterbury but myself." In this mood the King was taken ill at Gloucester. The people urged him to appoint an archbishop, and public prayers were offered up in the churches that God would guide his choice. Singularly enough, Anselm was at Gloucester at the time, and was sent for to comfort and advise the sick monarch. He urged repentance upon William, and made him promise faithfully to restore all Church property, and to abide by the laws of his country, should he *recover*. The people eagerly flocked to the place where the *King lay*, in order to learn whether an archbishop had been appointed. When they heard at length that the choice had

fallen upon the Abbot of Bec their joy was unbounded. To the surprise of all, Anselm refused to accept the archbishopric. Doubtless he felt in his own mind how unfitted he was to deal with William, for he is said to have exclaimed: "It is like yoking a poor old sheep to the same plough with a young untamed bull."

The account of Anselm's appointment is very amusing, and shows without doubt his great reluctance to accept the honour thus thrust upon him. It was necessary that the King, though ill in bed, should place the crosier in the Archbishop-elect's hand. Without listening to Anselm's scruples, the bishops and people exclaimed that no time was to be lost, and he was hurried into the presence of William. With tears in his eyes, the King implored Anselm to relent. Still he hesitated. The crosier was brought and placed in the King's hands. Anselm pushed both hands into his pockets, and refused to hold it. The Bishop by main force at length made him grasp it, and shouting: "Long live the new Archbishop!" carried him in triumph into the nearest church. The "Te Deum" was instantly chanted; but Anselm's weak frame was exhausted by the excitement, and muttering: "It is naught, it is naught that ye do," fainted away. Such is the quaint scene of past days narrated by a witness.

Anselm became Archbishop, and on the King's recovery was formally consecrated in Canterbury Cathedral on the 4th December, 1093.

CHAPTER IV.

WILLIAM II. *continued*.—1093 to 1100.

GREAT MEN OF PAST DAYS—WHAT SHOULD BE OUR JUDGMENT OF THEM—
 STRUGGLE OF THE POPES FOR SUPREMACY—PATRIOTIC FEELING IN ENGLAND
 —CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE PAPACY—ANSELM'S
 UNWISE CONDUCT—FAILURE OF HIS INTERVIEWS WITH WILLIAM—IRRITATION
 OF THE KING—ANSELM OBTAINS THE "PALL"—HIS DESIRE TO VISIT ROME
 —OPPOSITION OF WILLIAM—MEETING OF BISHOPS—ANSELM DEPARTS—
 HIS LAST MEETING WITH THE KING—DEATH OF WILLIAM—THE CRUSADES
 —PILGRIMAGES—PETER THE HERMIT—SPEECH OF URBAN—FERVOUR OF
 THE CRUSADERS—OSMUND, BISHOP OF SALISBURY—HE COMPILES A FRESH
 SERVICE BOOK—ITS GENERAL ADOPTION THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY—
 FORMS OF PRAYER.

In looking back at the lives of the great men of the past, it is easy for us, in these days, to think that, in many ways, they might have acted more wisely and with greater foresight than

they did. But, before we condemn their actions, we must ever bear in mind that they acted up to the light they had; nor could they look forward into the future, as we can scan the past, and see the result of their actions. We must therefore deal charitably with the failings of our ancestors, remembering that many of the follies of past ages may be met with in our own day, only in another form. In the tenth chapter of my first part,* I gave you an account of the wonderful influence which by degrees the Popes of Rome gained over the minds of the people; so that all that they taught, however contrary to God's word and the custom of antiquity, was received with reverence and obeyed. In some countries the Pope was owned as supreme head of the Church without a struggle. In England it was far otherwise. There is no notion more untrue and yet more common than this—that from the time of the Norman Conquest (or even earlier) to the Reformation our country was entirely under the power of Rome. I do not say that the Norman kings and the people of England withheld that respect which the bishops of Rome claimed as head of the Church; but it is clear that those kings who governed wisely and gained the loyal affections of their people invariably withstood the unjust demands which the papal power made upon the liberties of the nation. We have no right to think that the ambition of the popes alone was the cause of their unbounded power. The circumstances of the age all favoured their claim. When might was stronger than right, when all kinds of tyranny and oppression prevailed, when kings and their subjects quarrelled, men turned naturally for help to that power which they regarded as divine, the grand centre of unity and justice—the Pope of Rome. What right have we to conclude that, if we had lived in those days, we should have acted differently? If we possess greater light now, let us be careful that we profit by it.

Anselm had from his youth been taught to regard the Pope as his spiritual head; and we cannot, therefore, be surprised that when he became Archbishop of Canterbury he considered it his bounden duty to support the Papal authority. Unfortunately, instead of conciliating the King, his first act was to put him out of temper. It was customary for the Archbishop, on his instalment, to offer the King a sum of money. Anselm, fearing lest people should imagine he had purchased the honour, hesitated. At last he determined to present William with five hundred pounds of silver—the least sum he could possibly offer. *The King* again received him cordially, but, unfortunately, *Anselm, as before, irritated and provoked him by his unwise*

* It would be well to refer to this, and read it.

remarks. William complained of the smallness of the sum, and after some discussion Anselm remarked, with considerable haughtiness: "Treat me as a friend, and you may do what you will with me and mine, but nought shall you have if you treat me as a slave." William's Norman blood was up in a moment, and he exclaimed, in a rage: "I want neither thee nor thy foul tongue; so be off with thee!" The next interview between the King and the Archbishop was equally unhappy. Anselm could hardly have chosen a more inopportune moment for urging his requests. William was about to start on an expedition into Normandy to lay claim to his brother Robert's estates. He was surrounded by a large body of young courtiers dressed in the extravagant fashion of the period. Their long ringlets, bushy beards, and effeminate costume offended the simple-minded prelate, and he refused absolution to all who declined to shave their beards and cut off their hair. Anselm's intention was good, but his want of tact in choosing the opportunity called down upon him the ridicule instead of the respect of those he wished to influence. Horrified by the state of immorality into which the nation had fallen, Anselm urged the King to call a synod or meeting of the clergy to reform these abuses. William, full of his expedition, listened with impatience to the Archbishop's melancholy and lengthy statement. He further urged the King to appoint abbots to the monasteries, and to restore the money he had unlawfully seized. This was touching a sore point. The King refused to listen further, exclaiming: "This conversation is offensive to me; you must know very well Lanfranc would never have dared to speak thus to my father. Go; I can do nothing for you." Anselm, as usual, kept his temper, and retired; but the effect of these frequent quarrels between the King and prelate on the Church was sad indeed. No synod was called; whilst the unholiness of the clergy and people continued unchecked. Anselm imagined he had done his best, and so felt satisfied.

It was customary for the Pope to bestow on the archbishop a "pall," as it was called, a sort of hood, with four crosses woven in it. It was a kind of sign that he had the Pope's authority to hold his office, and we can imagine that a man like Anselm would feel most uneasy until he had obtained it.* One of the laws of England at this time was, that no prelate could leave the kingdom without the consent of the sovereign. The Archbishop considered that it was necessary that he should go to Rome in person to receive the "pall," but this he could not do *until the king's sanction* was obtained. On his return from

* *Dr. Hook's Lives*, vol. ii., p. 184.

Normandy Anselm waited on William ; but the expedition having failed, the King was out of temper, and in no mood to grant the Archbishop's request. He flatly refused. The matter was finally settled by Anselm's receiving the "pall" from the Pope's Legate at Canterbury. Still Anselm persisted in his determination to pay his respects in person to Pope Urban ; but the king, fearing lest his holiness would support Anselm's claim against his own authority, still refused. Anselm was perplexed. Was he to disobey his king, or renounce his reverence for the Pope ? To decide this difficult question a meeting of bishops was called. They sided with the King ; but the Archbishop remained inflexible, and expressed his intention of going, whether the King gave his consent or not. He prepared, therefore, to leave England. The King, enraged, sent messengers to Anselm to inform him that if he persevered in his intention of defying the authority of the crown he should be allowed to take nothing with him. "Then," said Anselm, "I will depart naked and on foot." When these words were repeated to William, some of his old kindly feeling returned, and he relented. It is a relief to find that the last interview which ever took place between the King and prelate was one of peace. "I go, my lord," said Anselm ; "but your welfare does not the less affect my heart ; and not knowing when we may meet again, I now, as a spiritual father to a son, offer you my blessing if you do not reject it." "Your benediction," said the King, with reverence, "I do not reject." He bowed his head, the Archbishop made the sign of the cross over him, and they parted never to meet again. While Anselm was abroad the news of William's sudden and awful death in the New Forest reached him. He was greatly shocked. Perhaps the thought may have passed through his mind, Had he really gone the right way to influence William ? But the recollection that their last interview was one of peace must have afforded him infinite comfort.

I am sure you remember reading in your History of England about the Crusades. As the subject began to be discussed about this time, I must tell you a little about it in this chapter. Jerusalem, or the Holy City, as it is often called, had formerly been inhabited by Christians ; but for some wise purpose God allowed it to fall into the hands of infidels. The people of whom I speak were called Mahomedans, or followers of the false prophet, Mahomet. Inflamed with extraordinary zeal *and courage*, these men fought with a bravery worthy of a *better cause*. Their arms were victorious in almost every *instance*, while the nations they conquered were treated with

forbearance on condition that they consented to become followers of Mahomet, fight under his banner, and forsake their own religion. Under the impression that God favoured their cause, they fought with the strength and spirit of lions; but it was the religion of the sword, not the religion of love. Single nations were quite unable to cope with so mighty a power. It was evident that the whole of Christendom must unite to drive back an overwhelming host of infidels. Those places which had been rendered sacred by the presence of our blessed Lord were now the abode of men who jeered at the holy truths of Christianity, and treated its divine Founder with contempt. It had long been customary for many Christians to visit the Holy Land at certain times; these persons were called pilgrims, and their motive for going was originally a good one. I hope, dear children, you have read with reverence and thankfulness the account which the Bible gives us of our blessed Lord's deeds of love and mercy on earth, His wonderful miracles, His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, His crowning act of divine love—dying for us on the cross—and His glorious resurrection and ascension. It is easy to imagine that, could we visit the spot where these scenes took place, and meditate on them, our religious feelings would be roused. Doubtless these pilgrims of old often found comfort and help while visiting the sacred spots which had been hallowed by their Master's presence. Unhappily, this good practice became, in course of time, abused, and when men had committed any gross sin, they imagined a pilgrimage to the Holy Land would wash out that sin in God's sight. But you know that a journey, even to Jerusalem, could never take the place of faith and repentance. Christian Europe was horrified by the desecration of the Holy City; but as yet nothing had been done to free it from the grasp of the infidel. At this juncture a remarkable man arose. Peter the Hermit, a French monk, had just returned from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The miseries he there saw the Christians enduring roused his energy and zeal; and on his return to Europe he preached with such earnestness on the subject that people flocked in crowds to hear him, and soon became animated with his fervour. Pope Urban shared the general excitement; and in a famous speech made by him in a Council held at Clermont, in France, he urged the princes of Europe to join heart and soul in the cause, and if possible drive the infidels from the Holy City. "Go on, therefore," he exclaims, "in the name of God. Distinguish yourselves in *your Saviour's cause*, and despise the hazard of *the enterprise*, for the sufferings of this present time are not *worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us*. You cannot engage too soon, for God will go along with

you. Happy are those that join in this enterprise, and have the privilege of viewing that holy country, in which God has condescended to converse with mankind; a place which was the scene of all the wonders of His incarnation, and where He was born, crucified, and raised from the dead for us." This exhortation made a wonderful impression on the princes and people of Christendom; the enterprise was a popular one, and a large army was soon collected. As I proceed I shall have to speak of the Crusades again, because they are connected in many ways with our history; at present I must proceed with the account of our own Church. Since the settlement of the Normans in England, the Service Book of Gregory the Great, which Augustine had introduced, and which was generally used throughout England, had given place in many parts to other forms of prayer. As each bishop had the power of making alterations in the liturgy of his church, in course of time various forms of prayer existed. Thus we hear of the "use," as it is called, or form of prayer of York, Hereford, Lincoln, &c. The inconvenience of this system was found to be very great; for though all the Bishops agreed that the use of *some form* of prayer in public worship was in accordance with ancient Jewish and with primitive Christian practice, yet, at the same time, each bishop considered his own "use" superior to that of any of the others. You remember the disgraceful scene I described which took place in Glastonbury Abbey, when the Norman Abbot Thurstan attempted to introduce a new form of chanting. In order to prevent the recurrence of such scenes, Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury (or Sarum, as it was then called), drew up with great care a fresh liturgy for use in his diocese. He did not compose new prayers, but he collected together and placed in his service books all the best ancient prayers which had been used from the earliest ages. These service books soon became widely used, and ere long the greater part of England, Wales, and Ireland adopted them. Our ancestors knew well how to appreciate a *form* of public worship; and ought we not to feel thankful that most of these ancient prayers are still preserved to us in our present "Book of Common Prayer?" It is a comforting thought, that as we kneel down in God's house, we are not uttering our prayers and praises alone. Numbers of our countrymen, the beloved ones who are absent, it may be, in distant lands, are joining their petitions with ours in the self-same words. May this thought tend to make our prayers more *real and our praises more hearty*; and let us refuse to listen to *those who would cast discredit on that ancient "form of sound words" which has been handed down to us by the piety of our ancestors.*

CHAPTER V.

HENRY I.—1100 to 1109.

HENRY RECALLS ANSELM—CHARACTERS OF HENRY AND ANSELM COMPARED—ANSELM REFUSES TO PAY HOMAGE—PERPLEXITY OF HENRY—HIS MARRIAGE WITH MATILDA OF SCOTLAND—HER EXCELLENCE AND POPULARITY—POPE'S LEGATE DISMISSED—FEELING OF THE NATION—ANSELM LEAVES ENGLAND—LETTER OF QUEEN MATILDA—ANSELM'S FRIENDSHIP WITH THE QUEEN—HIS RETURN—HENRY AGREES TO A COMPROMISE—SYNOD AT WESTMINSTER—BENEDICTINE RULE ENFORCED ON THE CLERGY—ANSELM'S DEATH—CISTERCIAN ORDER FOUNDED—ITS SYSTEM—INDUSTRY OF THE MONKS—TINTERN ABBEY.

ON the death of William Rufus, his brother Henry ascended the throne. Henry's first act was to recall Anselm. The Archbishop landed at Dover, amid the joyful shouts of the populace, and was received by the King with every mark of respect and affection. It would have been a happy thing for the Church and nation had this good feeling lasted, but it was not to be. St. Paul, in his advice to Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, says: "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men;" * and again, in his instruction to Titus, whom he had consecrated Bishop of Crete, he says: "Avoid foolish questions and contentions and strivings about the law;" † and in another place: "Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another." ‡ Anselm doubtless had often read these words, but their spirit was unknown to him, or he would, I am sure, have acted differently. In comparing the characters of Anselm and Henry we cannot for a moment doubt that the Archbishop was by far the holier man of the two. Henry was in some respects a more contemptible man than his brother. He was an able and wise sovereign, and certainly had his temper more under control than William; but in order to gain his end he would stoop to falsehood and acts of cruelty. Though quite as tyrannical and unprincipled as his brother, he was far more clever and clear-sighted, and this, perhaps, made him the more dangerous. If, however, we would judge fairly, we may not shut our eyes to the fact that in the quarrel with Anselm the King had the right on his side. On his accession Henry promised faithfully to observe the laws of Edward the Confessor, and never to lay hands on any Church property. In order to show his sincerity he hastened to reinstate Anselm in his office, on condition that he would observe the laws of the country, and pay the King the accustomed homage. To the surprise of all,

* 2 Tim. ii. 24.

† Titus iii. 9.

‡ Rom. xiv. 19.

Anselm refused. His plea was this : At a late synod held by the Pope at Rome, it was decreed that no layman, nor even a prince, could invest a bishop in his office, only the Pope himself. Now, although Anselm had received investiture from the hands of the Conqueror, when he became Abbot of Bec, and from William Rufus when he was elected to the see of Canterbury, he now refused to receive it from Henry, on the ground that the law, though a new one, was passed by the Pope at the Council at Rome, and so must be obeyed. Anselm's message to Henry was not a very conciliatory one. "Unless," he says, "the King thinks fit to comply with the see of Rome I cannot stay in this country, and therefore I desire he would please to acquaint me with his resolution." * Henry was in a great strait. Farsighted as he was, he perceived that to yield to this new and unwarrantable demand would be to give the Pope a firm footing in the country. It might be the beginning of a series of unjust claims which might end in his (or at all events his successors) being king only in name. The case was, therefore, most important. Again, Henry dared not, for his own sake, offend so holy and popular a man as Anselm, particularly as his right to the crown was rather doubtful. He therefore begged that the subject might be allowed to rest until the following Easter, when the opinion of the Pope should be obtained. It is due to Henry to state that in the meantime he permitted Anselm to enjoy his property, and treated him with every mark of respect and friendship. While we blame Anselm for his obstinacy, we may not altogether accuse him of a desire to enslave his country to the Pope. He imagined he was maintaining the liberty of the Church against the tyranny of the King. He only shared with the rest of his fellow-men the idea that the Bishop of Rome was supreme head of the universal Church, and as such might command the reverence and obedience of all other bishops. Henry's mind was now fully occupied with other matters. On the 11th November, 1100, he married Matilda, daughter of the King of Scotland. The match was a most popular one. Matilda was of Saxon blood ; but what was still better, she inherited most of the noble qualities of her race. Holy and charitable, she checked her husband in many an act of cruelty and lawlessness, while the oppressed Saxons regarded her as their very guardian angel. Anselm performed the marriage ceremony, and thereby increased his popularity.

About this time the Pope sent his legate into England to *confirm and strengthen* his authority. A writer of the time

* *Collier's Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*, vol. ii., p. 100.

exclaims with indignation : "Such a thing as this was never heard of, that any person should represent the Pope in England, except the Archbishop of Canterbury."* The general opinion was the same. Up to this time the English Church stood upon its ancient right, and refused submission to the foreign power of Rome. It is to be remarked that Anselm joined in the popular feeling, and the legate, though a well-known and powerful man, was forced to beat an undignified retreat across the Channel.

Were I to enter upon the endless differences between Anselm and Henry, I feel sure I should weary you. I would only have you remember the principle that was involved in the controversy. Anselm, on the one side, stood up strenuously for what he considered the rights and liberties of the Church; while Henry, on the other hand, asserted the authority of the sovereign over the unjust claims of the See of Rome. It was a mighty struggle, for it lasted for more than three centuries, ending only with the Reformation. As you may imagine, Pope Pascal sided warmly with Anselm; and when, some years after, the latter retired from England, he was received at Rome by the Pope with the utmost cordiality. In a quarrel of this kind, the country was sure to suffer; and during Anselm's exile the state of his diocese was deplorable. The good Queen Matilda, who had ever felt a warm admiration for the character of Anselm, was deeply grieved at his continued absence. "I look for your return," she says, in one of her letters to him, "as a daughter for the return of her father, as a handmaiden for her lord and master, as a sheep for the shepherd's care." Speaking of the King, she adds: "His mind is not so provoked against you as some think, and by God's good will, with my suggestion, which shall not be wanting, he will become more disposed to concord."

Mildly, but with reverence, she ventures to reproach the Archbishop with his share in the quarrel: "I do beseech you, in the abundance of your compassionate spirit, lay aside all rancour of human bitterness, which is not natural to you, and turn not from my lord the gentleness of love, nay rather, be a kind intercessor with God, both for him, for me, and my little ones, and the prosperity of our kingdom."† It was mainly through the influence of this Christian woman that a reconciliation was effected, and Anselm returned. He ever remained the firm friend and spiritual adviser of the good Matilda, delighting in her superior talents and polished mind. Anselm spent many *happy hours in her society*.

* *Eadmer*. † *Churton's History of the Early English Church*, p. 303.

A writer of the time tells us that the Queen took especial delight in attending God's service.* A great lover of sacred music, she spared no trouble or expense in providing "melodious voices for her choir, addressing them kindly, and bestowing alms upon them liberally." In all this she obtained the willing support and help of the Archbishop. The matter between Henry and Anselm was finally settled by a sort of compromise, although in the end the Pope and the Archbishop really gained their point. These quarrels between the Kings of England and the prelates greatly strengthened the claims of the Popes of Rome; and the more the disputes were referred to them to decide, the more they claimed the right to interfere, whether their opinion was asked or not.

About this time, a famous synod, or meeting of the Bishops and Clergy, was held at Westminster. The King willingly sanctioned it, and appears to have been anxious to support the authority of Anselm. A good many of the nobility were present, but they merely watched the proceedings, not being allowed to vote.† I would have you remember that on this occasion a law was passed, forbidding priests or any one in holy orders to marry, and those who had wives were commanded to put them away, on pain of being deprived of their benefices. In all ages there have been good priests who, like St. Paul, have thought they could serve God best by leading single lives; but to make such a state compulsory on the clergy was both unjust and unscriptural. The misery it caused was great. Notwithstanding the law of the land, the clergy in many instances retained their wives, preferring to encounter contempt and persecution, rather than break up their happy homes. It is satisfactory to know that the last years of Anselm's life were spent at peace with the King. When Henry embarked on an expedition to Normandy, the Archbishop attended him to the sea-coast, but was too ill to give him the parting benediction. He was then in a sinking state, and was with difficulty removed to Canterbury. The daily service afforded him great comfort. Unable to walk to the Cathedral, his monks carried him thither in a chair. He soon became too weak even for this; and on the Wednesday before Easter Day 1109, he peacefully expired.

I hope, from the account I have given you of this great man, that you have formed a tolerably just opinion of his character. Though, like eminent men in all times, he had some of the failings peculiar to his age, he possessed many noble qualities. *Full of deep religious feeling himself, he was greatly pained if*

* *William of Malmesbury*, p. 453.

† *Collier's Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*, vol. ii., p. 117.

he saw others living in sin. An old writer tells us that one day, as he was riding along, a hare, pursued by the hounds, ran under his horse for refuge. Anselm's eyes filled with tears: "This hare," said he, "reminds me of a sinner just dying, surrounded by devils waiting for their prey."* He possessed almost a woman's gentleness, whilst he gained the love and respect of the people by his consistent mode of life and princely liberality. Anselm was a very learned man, and left many works behind him. Although, as we have seen, he strenuously upheld the authority of the Pope, he would, I am certain, have objected to many of the new doctrines afterwards enforced by the Romish Church. He firmly believed that our Saviour alone could forgive sins, and that He died upon the cross to atone for our transgressions. He wrote a book especially on this subject.

A little before the time of which I am now speaking, a new order of monks arose in the Church, called the Cistercian order. You remember I told you that the system introduced by Dunstan among the clergy was called the rule or system of St. Benedict. All monks belonging to the order were forbidden to marry, and lived by very strict rules. Anselm, as we have seen, made binding on all his clergy that rule of St. Benedict by which they were obliged to lead single lives. The Cistercians professed to follow closely the Benedictine rule but not considering it sufficiently strict, they added more austere rules of their own. The Cistercian monks toiled hard, allowing themselves little food or rest. The waste lands which surrounded their monastery were cultivated with the utmost care, and quantities of cattle were reared by them, and sold to the people at stated seasons, in the courtyard of the monastery. At these cattle-fairs a great deal of wool and wheat was also sold. The Cistercians were famous for the growth of these articles, particularly the wool. In order to encourage the people to attend the fairs, "the monks repaired the roads, erected bridges, and placed guides to see the travellers safe across the pathless down or intricate forest."†

The Cistercians objected to the gorgeous service of the Benedictines; they worshipped in the plainest manner, allowing no organ in the church, and using only the simplest chants. But, to judge from the noble ruins that still remain in different parts of the country, their churches must have been very beautiful. They were always erected in the most romantic spots. I shall ever remember with pleasure the visit I paid to Tintern on the Wye. *The ruins of this once fine Cistercian Abbey stand on*

* *Eadmer.*

† Dr. Hook's *Lives*, vol. iii., p. 43.

one of the most picturesque bends of this lovely river. As I lingered in its hallowed transept, meditating on the past, and watched the silver moonlight as it shone through the broken tracery of that once magnificent east window, I grieved to think that the voice of prayer and praise would never again be heard to resound through the aisles of that consecrated temple.

CHAPTER VI.

HENRY I. *continued*.—1109 to 1135.

STEPHEN.—1135 to 1154.

HENRY'S CRAFTY POLICY—HIS PIOUS REMARKS WITH REGARD TO THE RESTORATION OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL—RALPH, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—HIS EXCELLENT CHARACTER—DISPUTE WITH THURSTON, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK—INTERFERENCE OF THE POPE—CORDIALITY BETWEEN THE KING AND ARCHBISHOP—DISCOMFITURE OF THE LEGATE—DEATH OF RALPH—WILLIAM OF CORBOIL ELECTED—HIS UNPOPULARITY—THE POPE'S LEGATE PRESIDES AT THE WESTMINSTER COUNCIL—FEELING OF THE NATION—OPENING AND CONSECRATION OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL—DEATH OF HENRY—STEPHEN CROWNED BY ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM—DEATH OF WILLIAM OF CORBOIL—HIS MEANNESS—SAD CONDITION OF ENGLAND DURING THE REIGN OF STEPHEN—CASTLES AND MONASTERIES—ARCHBISHOP THEOBALD—HIS WISDOM AND HOLINESS—HENRY OF BLOIS, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER—THEOBALD'S PEACEABLE AND WISE CONDUCT—HE REFUSES TO CROWN STEPHEN'S SON, EUSTACE—EUSTACE DIES, AND HENRY, MATILDA'S SON, BECOMES KING.

On the death of Anselm, Henry did as his brother William had done, and kept the See of Canterbury vacant for five years. He craftily professed to do it from a good motive, that he might have time to deliberate, and to make a wise choice. But his real object was soon apparent. He seized the property of the see, and appropriated it to his own purposes. As I have dwelt a good deal on Henry's faults, it is only just that I should relate something to his credit. For some time the Cathedral at Canterbury had been undergoing thorough restoration. The monks collected large sums of money for this good work, which Lanfranc had begun, and Anselm had set his heart on. You remember when a penitent sinner knelt before our Saviour, and poured on his feet the "box of ointment of spikenard very precious," the niggardly Pharisees condemned what they called the needless waste. But our Lord reproved them, showing thereby that our precious offerings are pleasing in His sight. In all ages there have been men who, like these Pharisees, consider how small a sum they can offer to God. Henry's answer to the meanness of those who complained that the monks

had expended more than was right on God's temple, is worthy of record : " If," said he, " they spend their income in enlarging the house of God, and in making it more magnificent, then praise be to God, who has inspired them with a will to engage in such works. Praise be to God, who has vouchsafed to me the blessing that in my days my Holy Mother, the Church of England, receives, not damage, but increase."*

In the year 1114, Ralph, Bishop of Rochester, was appointed to fill the See of Canterbury. It is seldom that we find all parties agreeing in the nomination of an Archbishop ; but in this case both the regular and secular clergy and the people generally felt satisfied with Henry's choice. It was certainly a wise one. Ralph had been Anselm's intimate friend ; and that he was well known and respected is evident from these words of a writer of the time :† " Inferior to none in piety, he was eminent for his great learning and surpassing affability ; and in the midst of his good fortune he cared for nothing better than to confer greater benefits on his friends." Such a man as this was well calculated to fill the See of Canterbury at a time when firmness, judgment, and conciliatory behaviour were so much needed. Ralph nevertheless was soon involved in a dispute which in those days was considered very important. Thurstan, Archbishop of York, was a man revered for his piety and charitable deeds. His conduct was upright and his mode of living frugal, although he was famous for his kindness and hospitality. When first elected Archbishop of York, he applied to Ralph for consecration. The Archbishop readily agreed, but required first the usual oath of canonical obedience. Thurstan was not a selfish man, and there is every reason to believe that he would have yielded to this reasonable request had he been allowed to do so ; but his followers and admirers, eager for the honour of the See of York, urged their Archbishop to resist, as some of his predecessors had done. He therefore refused to take the oath, and both parties appealed to the King. It would have been well had it ended here, but the Pope was referred to, and as usual reaped the benefit. He sided with Thurstan, and to the surprise and annoyance of the King and Bishops, called a Council, and with his own hands consecrated Thurstan Archbishop of York. Disgusted at this open attack on the liberties of the Church of England, Henry refused to allow Thurstan to enter his dominions, and so the matter rested for a time. Throughout this whole affair Ralph and the King acted cordially together, as William and Lanfranc had done ; whilst they

* *Dr. Hook's Lives*, vol. ii., p. 284.

† *William of Malmesbury*.

were strenuously supported by the Bishops and people. Henry and the Archbishop both enjoyed a joke; and when shortly afterwards the Pope ventured to send his legate to England, he was courteously received by these two great persons. But the result of the meeting was sufficiently amusing. The legate was firmly though respectfully informed that his presence was disagreeable, and when forced to beat an ignominious retreat the King and Prelate laughed heartily over the Pope's discomfiture.

Archbishop Ralph's life was unfortunately a brief one. His last public act was to marry Henry to his second wife Adelicia, the beautiful daughter of Geoffry, Count of Louvaine. He died shortly afterwards, in the year 1122, and was buried in his Cathedral.

About four months after the death of Ralph, Henry called a Council at Gloucester, to consider the appointment of a new Archbishop. This was no easy matter, for at this time party spirit ran high. The monks wished to elect one of their own order, whilst the secular clergy would have preferred a man from their own ranks. As usual, a sort of compromise was decided on, and William of Corboil, a French priest, was elected. This man appears to have been as much disliked as Ralph was respected; a witty but not very complimentary saying has come down to us. "He ought not," says an Abbot of the time, "to be called William of Corboil, but William of Turmoil." In all this we must make due allowance for party feeling, but William certainly was unpopular and unpatriotic also. You remember the sad affliction God sent upon Henry. His only son William, on whom all his hopes were fixed, was miserably drowned while crossing over from France. After his death, the King became eager to settle the succession on his daughter Matilda; and hoping for the Pope's support, it was his policy, if possible, to conciliate him. The feeling, however, of the country was such, that he had to proceed with great caution. At a Council held at Westminster, the Pope's legate, after considerable discussion, was permitted to attend. The Archbishop was a weak man, and easily overawed; but, to judge from the following statement of a monk who lived at the time, the feeling of the country was certainly against it. "At this time," says he, "came into England a certain legate named John, who was pompously received by William, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Thurstan, Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of England. Having gone through the whole of England, this legate presently held a Council at Westminster, and put the whole kingdom into no small state of indignation. For there you might have seen a

sight hitherto unknown in the realm of England—a clerk who had attained no higher grade than that of the priesthood seated aloft on a throne, and presiding over the whole assembly who had flocked thither, over Archbishops, Bishops, and Abbots, and the whole of the nobility of the kingdom; while they, occupying a lower position, composed their countenances and bridled their lips, like men dependent upon his nod.” He then mentions the fact that the legate, on Easter Day, sat in the Archbishop’s seat in Canterbury Cathedral, and received that honour due only to the Prelate. He concludes with the following indignant outburst: “This occurrence deeply wounded and scandalized the minds of many, and clearly indicates not only the novelty of the occurrence, but how much the ancient realm of England is now violated.”* Shortly afterwards William of Corboil visited Rome, and was received with affection by the Pope, who actually appointed him his legate. Even at this distance of time, we can understand how such a step would give the Pope a still firmer footing in England; but the Archbishop appears to have been quite unconscious that he was endangering the freedom of his See. William was a weak-minded man, and we ought not to be surprised at his want of forethought. He acted up to the light he had, and followed out the principles of his age.

In the year 1130, the restoration of Canterbury Cathedral, which I told you Lanfranc began, was completed. Archbishop William lived to be present at the consecration. From all accounts the ceremony must have been a very magnificent one. King Henry, together with David, King of Scotland, and a large body of nobles, with all the Bishops, was present. It was a popular work, and all classes showed a willing interest in it. Five years after this event, Henry was called to his last account. We are surprised to find that Archbishop William’s first act, after the death of the King, was to consecrate Stephen, Henry’s nephew, King of England. During the last years of his life, Henry had struggled hard to secure the throne for his daughter Matilda, and had made the Archbishop promise to support her claim to the utmost. William’s conduct therefore appears, at first sight, false and disloyal in the extreme. There was, however, a report spread that Henry on his death-bed had absolved his subjects from their oath of allegiance to his daughter. Stephen had always been a favourite with his uncle, and many of the leading men of England, together with the Archbishop, appear to have believed the report. This will in some measure account for what appears to us a most unworthy act on the part of the Archbishop. This

* Gervas.

prelate died in the year 1156. After his decease large sums were discovered in his coffers, which he had secretly hoarded, instead of expending them for the good of his people. As you may suppose, this fact did not increase the Archbishop's popularity, and few there were who regretted the mean and unpatriotic William of Corboil.

We are now approaching a sad period in the history of our Church and country. You have read in your history of England of the disastrous civil war that desolated the land during the reign of King Stephen. At no period had the Norman barons possessed such unbounded power. Stephen was but King in name. It is a dreadful thing for any country when bad and lawless men are all-powerful. Yet such was the unhappy position of England at this time. The nobles, entrenched in their impregnable castles, sallied forth and committed every species of cruelty and oppression on their helpless fellow-countrymen. "Sad it was," says a writer who lived at this time, "to see England, once the cherisher of peace, and the receptacle of tranquillity, reduced to such a pitch of misery, that not even the Bishops or monks could pass in safety from one town to another." The King—but a chief baron himself—was altogether powerless to check the evil. While the nation at large suffered, the state of the Church was equally deplorable. Every man joined the wars, and even the Bishops buckled on their armour, and fought on one side or the other. As you may imagine, a warrior Bishop could have little time or inclination to attend to his diocese or his clergy, and matters soon became hopelessly complicated. Unhappily, the Conqueror had made a very unwise law. If any priest or man in holy orders had committed a crime, he could not be judged by a Court composed of laymen—a secular Court, as it was called. Only a Court of Bishops, or an ecclesiastical Court, could pronounce sentence upon him. The prelates were at this time fully occupied away from their dioceses, and consequently were unable to hold Courts for the punishment of those of their clergy who were leading unworthy lives. You know that every profession and rank in life has its bad men, and even among the priests were to be found unholy men who disgraced their sacred calling by deeds of sin, and took advantage of the absence of their Bishop to commit all sorts of enormities. It is not therefore surprising that the religion of the people should grow cold, whilst those who were appointed by God to set them a holy example so completely failed in their duty. At this time again it is clear that Christianity would have ceased to exist, had it not been for the monasteries. It is a remarkable fact that while eleven hundred and fifteen castles were erected during

the reign of Stephen, more monasteries were built than at any previous time.* God in his wisdom permitted them to increase, in order that the power of the lawless barons might not wholly annihilate the true faith—that faith which in ages past had, in the darkest hours, inspired the people with patience and hope. God soon showed that He had not forgotten the “deep sighing of the poor” nor the peril of His Church; and it pleased Him at this juncture to raise up a man capable of wrestling manfully with the evil. The good Archbishop Theobald shines like a bright light in the darkness. He was Abbot of Bec, and therefore the third Archbishop we owe to that monastery. You have not, I hope, forgotten that Lanfranc and Anselm were the two first. Theobald was invited over by King Stephen, who had the wisdom to perceive that he was a man well suited to guide the helm of the Church of England at this stormy period.

I must not forget to tell you about one of the most warlike of the warrior bishops—the famous Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, and brother to King Stephen, whose chief supporter he was. Proud, ambitious, and unscrupulous, he was brave to a degree, and fought like a lion in the cause of his brother. He built a great many strong castles. If you ever pay a visit to the ancient town of Winchester, you may see the ruins of the Castle of Wolvesey, built by Henry of Blois. But the Hospital of St. Cross, near Winchester, bears testimony to the liberality of this knightly prelate. All men imagined he would be the future Archbishop; but for some reason Stephen overlooked him, and happily selected a man far better suited than his turbulent brother to hold the sacred office. Henry was too proud to show his temper at the time, but he never forgot nor forgave the affront, and shortly afterwards threw all his energies into the cause of Matilda. Taking advantage of the weakness of Stephen’s position, the Pope’s legate appeared in England, and gave his support and countenance to Henry of Winchester. But the King and Theobald proved too strong for him, even then; and it ended in the Abbot of Bec being elected Archbishop of Canterbury. Theobald was a man of determined character, calm and patient. Well able to hold his position with dignity, he showed great judgment in managing the affairs of the Church at this difficult crisis. In the midst of war and tumult, his palace was the abode of peace. A learned man himself, he encouraged the friendship of men of learning and genius, who delighted in his agreeable companionship. Theobald continued loyal to Stephen to the last. Notwithstanding all the ill-will and opposition he met with from Henry of

* *Dr. Hook’s Lives*, vol. ii., p. 325.

Blois, he contrived to reconcile the King to his ambitious brother; and that he triumphed over, and yet in the end became the friend of the Bishop of Winchester, proves him to have been a gentle lover of peace, and also a man of singular tact. Before his death, Stephen was most anxious to secure the throne for his son Eustace, and urged the Archbishop to crown him. But Theobald refused. He had the good of his country at heart, and foresaw infinite misery to the nation, should the claim of Henry, the son of the "Empress Maud," be set aside. Theobald, by his patriotism, incurred for a time the severe displeasure of the King; but the bishops and leading men of the country were all on his side; and, upon the death of Eustace, Stephen no longer offered any opposition, and Henry was declared heir to the throne. The Bishop of Winchester sided cordially with Theobald, who, by his wise and pacific conduct, gained the respect of both factions, and by his firmness at a critical moment secured the throne to the rightful heir.

CHAPTER VII.

HENRY II.—1154 TO 1161.

ALBIGENSES AND WALDENSES—OPINIONS OF THE ALBIGENSES—THEIR PERSECUTION—KNIGHTS TEMPLARS—CHARACTER OF STEPHEN—THOMAS À BECKET—HIS INTIMACY WITH ARCHBISHOP THEOBALD—HIS BRILLIANT WIT AND POPULARITY—POSITION OF THE CLERGY—BECKET'S FRIENDSHIP WITH HENRY—IS MADE LORD CHANCELLOR—CHARACTER OF BECKET UNJUSTLY TREATED BY MODERN WRITERS—HIS WISDOM AS A STATESMAN—POPULAR MEASURES OF HENRY—HIS CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE—AFFECTION FOR BECKET—FOIBLES OF THE CHANCELLOR—AMUSING SCENE—THEOBALD'S ADVICE TO HENRY—HIS DEATH.

I WONDER if you have ever heard of the Albigenses and Waldenses, and the cruel persecution they endured, for the sake of their religion. The new sect of the Albigenses first made its appearance in France. Refusing to own the authority of the Church, these unfortunate people were treated by the bishops with the utmost severity, cruelly whipped, and turned adrift in the depth of winter. Numbers miserably perished. We always find that one extreme begets another. If one person unduly exalts any particular Christian truth, another is sure to underrate it. So it has been in all ages of the Church of *Christ*. The Roman Church gave such undue prominence to *some of the doctrines* held by the Church Catholic, that others, *equally important*, were almost wholly excluded. As a natural

result of this, certain sects arose at various times, that entirely denied those saving truths which the Church of Rome had exaggerated, but which in themselves were most necessary. This was the case with the Albigenses; and although we feel justly indignant at the savage treatment they met with, we may not countenance their errors. Many of the Christian doctrines they certainly believed, but in their fanaticism they denied the necessity of marriage, and actually rejected the Holy Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These blessed means of grace, you know, our Lord Himself ordained; but the Albigenses failed to perceive that contempt for them would endanger their souls. No sin is more displeasing to God than the sin of disobedience, and by neglecting these holy ordinances the Albigenses were disobeying in two instances their Lord's express command. When He instituted the Blessed Sacrament of His body and blood, these were the solemn words with which He concluded: "Do this in remembrance of me." And before He ascended into heaven, what was the parting injunction He gave His disciples? "Go ye and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."* It is clear, therefore, that these unfortunate Albigenses departed from the truth; but this fact cannot excuse the conduct of their brother Christians. St. Paul does not recommend us to act with harshness and cruelty towards any Christian brother who may be disposed to disobey the truth. This would never win him over; but he says: "Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."† It is true that the Church was obeying the apostolic command, when she "marked those who were causing divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine of Christ;"‡ but her mode of proceeding with the offenders was neither Scriptural nor worthy of that Divine Master who came to preach the Gospel of Peace.

Before we proceed with our history, I must just mention the Knights Templars, an order which, a little before this time, was established in the Church. The Templars took their rise at Jerusalem. After the infidels had obtained possession of the Holy City, the Christian pilgrims who went there were frequently exposed to great danger. The order of the Knights Templars was established for their protection. They were called Templars because the religious house where they lived was situated near the supposed site of the Jewish Temple. But they were not confined to Jerusalem. The order rapidly increased in strength and importance. A great many settled in *England and other countries*, and being most popular, their

* *St. Matthew xxviii. 19.*

† *2 Thess. iii. 15.*

‡ *Rom. xvi. 17.*

wealth soon became enormous. In each nation they had a particular governor, called the Master of the Temple; but the Grand Master, or chief of the whole order, had his residence at Paris. The beautiful church called the Temple Church, in London, was built by them, and some of their tombs may yet be seen in it. I shall most likely have to speak of these Templars again, so you must not forget what I have told you about them here.

The reign of King Stephen was certainly a most disastrous one for England; but some points in this King's character are worthy of admiration, although the fact of his being a usurper causes many to overlook his good qualities. He was brave to a degree, liberal, and much beloved by his adherents for his affability and kindness. Unhappily, the unfortunate position in which he was placed prevented his rewarding his friends as he wished to do; and for this reason some were base enough to desert him. But that Archbishop Theobald should have stood by him to the last is certainly in his favour.

At this point in our history, I must introduce to your notice one of those eminent men who seem to stand out prominently from among the crowd. No child who has read the history of England can ever forget the tragic story of the celebrated Thomas à Becket. Like some great general who has fought a mighty battle, his name has become a household word among us, although he has long since passed to his everlasting rest. I told you that Archbishop Theobald delighted to gather round him all the most learned and agreeable men of the time. No one was more admired at the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury than young Thomas à Becket, the son of Gilbert à Becket, a knight of London. His appearance and manners showed him to be a man of no common ability. Tall in stature, with a keen, bright eye, he delighted every one by his ready wit and fluent conversation. Becket was remarkable for the energy and firmness with which he carried out any scheme he believed to be a right one. He always acted from a sense of duty, and "whatever his hand found to do, he did it with all his might," nor could anything move him from his purpose. He showed great affection for his friends, but he seldom forgave his enemies; and when provoked his temper was violent in the extreme. We must be careful not to allow our admiration of the noble traits of his character to prevent us from seeing, in this respect, his serious failings as a Christian; for God's word, you know, tells us "to leave off from wrath, and to let go displeasure;" and again, "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses against Him."

When quite young, his parents regarded him as a child of singular promise, and, fondly hoping that some day he might fill a high position, they procured for him the best education the times afforded. Becket was brilliant and witty, but he was not a really learned man like Anselm, nor do we discover in his boyhood that taste for sanctity which is so conspicuous in the case of the Abbot of Bec. The young Thomas delighted in fun and merriment, and threw himself with ardour into all youthful sports and exercises. No man was more popular among the youths of his time than he. But Becket showed little or no relish for theological studies, nor would he have taken holy orders unless driven to do so by the usages of the time. In those days a man could hardly expect to hold any office of distinction in the State unless he had previously been ordained. The clergy filled all kinds of secular offices. It was no uncommon thing to see the priest combining with his sacred profession the duties of lawyer, statesman, or even soldier. This may seem strange to us now, but in those days the learned Bishop or priest felt that, by so doing, he could best advance the cause of the Church, and watch over and protect her interests. Learned men, at that time, were to be found chiefly among the clergy; therefore learned men must be chosen from their ranks to guide the State. Henry II., young, impetuous, and affectionate, soon became warmly attached to Thomas, whom he first met at the court of Archbishop Theobald. The old prelate gladly encouraged the intimacy. His keen apprehension perceived qualities in Becket which singularly fitted him to fill a high office; and fearing lest the young King should suffer from evil councillors, he urged him to appoint Thomas his Chancellor. Without hesitation, Henry consented, and Becket became his firm friend and loyal servant. The story I have to tell you is a very sad and melancholy one; I would fain, therefore, dwell for a little time on the peaceful scene of hope at its commencement; for those two noble hearts, which now beat with such loving affection the one to the other, were soon to be severed for ever.

No man has been more unjustly dealt with by modern historians than the great Thomas à Becket. To say, as one of them does, "that his whole conduct was odious and contemptible,"* is most untrue. We shrink from such a prejudicial opinion as this; but at the same time we must avoid the opposite extreme, and not exalt him into a perfect character, as some of his admirers have done. My endeavour in these pages will be to give you a faithful, unbiassed account of this eminent

* Hume.

man, neither exaggerating his failings, nor unduly exalting his merits. Of one thing there can be no doubt: Thomas à Becket is entitled to rank amongst the most eminent of our statesmen. The important services he rendered to our country must ever be remembered by all honest-minded Englishmen with gratitude. Possessed of a large income, he spent comparatively little on himself, although he considered it a duty to keep up a certain amount of state. A large portion of his wealth was employed in promoting the good of his King and country. Like Dunstan, he influenced his sovereign to pass wise and popular measures. Many of the fortified castles, which the barons had converted into dens of iniquity and oppression, were razed to the ground. Those nobles who were permitted to retain their castles were compelled to acknowledge the King's supremacy. Justice was done to the oppressed and helpless; the desolated land was once more cultivated, and commerce encouraged. Becket was not a man to rest satisfied with half measures, and, by his wise and energetic conduct, he gained the respect and love of Henry, and the affection of the people. No one in all the kingdom was more popular than the gifted Chancellor Becket. There is much also to admire in the character of his friend and sovereign. Henry inherited from his ancestors a hot and hasty temper; but he was a man of loving heart and warm affections, far-seeing, clear-headed, and munificent. He was well calculated to rule a great nation like the English; while his kindly and affable manners endeared him to those who surrounded his throne. He is described by writers of the time as a middle-sized man, with red hair, grey eyes, and florid complexion. He despised the etiquette of the Court, and cared little for dainty food, frequently vaulting over the table before the conclusion of the repast. The Chancellor, who presided at the King's table, and, we hope, tried to keep order, was very different to his master in this respect. He certainly enjoyed a delicately-served meal, and a bumper of rich wine, and required respectful behaviour from those who sat with him at table. His love of joviality was not, however, allowed to interfere with his duty. That Becket had his foibles, there can be no doubt; he was an acknowledged "fop." Henry, careless and untidy in his attire, enjoyed twitting the Chancellor on the gorgeousness of his apparel, and would lead on the courtiers to join him in the laugh. On one occasion, Becket was apparelled in a rich jewelled mantle, which the King with much dignity drew from his shoulders, and placed on the back of a dirty and miserable beggar who stood by the wayside. The Chancellor could appreciate a joke, even at his own expense, and good-naturedly

joined in the shouts of laughter which rang from the merry monarch and his courtiers.

Archbishop Theobald was a staunch upholder of the Church ; and there is no doubt that Becket shared his opinion with regard to the great contest which had been going on between the Church and State. But the Chancellor was now the King's minister, and bound, therefore, to advance his interests only. In the year 1161 Theobald died. The friendship which existed between him and the King continued to the hour of his death. Henry always remembered with gratitude that he owed the peaceful possession of his throne to the Archbishop's promptness and loyalty, and honoured him accordingly. But that Theobald would jealously have guarded the rights of the Church against the power of the sovereign, had there been need of his so doing, is evident from the instructions he gave Henry just before his death. He prays the King not to lessen the power and authority of the Church, and adds : "God Almighty hath enlarged your highness's dominions, and advanced you to a great degree of grandeur ; and therefore it would be a most unreasonable act on your part to lessen the honour of your Benefactor, and oppress the Church." Becket, as it proved, profited well by the Archbishop's example and teaching, and became a firm and energetic champion of the rights of the Church. But the holy-minded Theobald was a peacemaker. His loving heart would have been grieved indeed, could he have foreseen the bitter hatred that afterwards sprang up between the men he had loved and brought together, and the unhallowed deed of darkness that marked its close.

CHAPTER VIII.

HENRY II. *continued.*—1161 to 1164.

HENRY OFFERS BECKET THE ARCHBISHOPRIC — BECKET'S SURPRISE — HIS REMARK TO THE KING — THE CONQUEROR'S POLICY — OPPOSITION OF CHURCH AND STATE—REASON OF BECKET'S CONDUCT—SINFUL BEHAVIOUR OF THE CLERGY—WHO WERE INCLUDED UNDER THE TERM "CLERGY"—EXCUSES FOR BECKET'S CONDUCT—HIS ALTERED BEHAVIOUR TO THE KING —REFUSES TO CONTINUE HIS CHANCELLOR—HENRY'S SURPRISE AND DISAPPOINTMENT—SOURCES OF CONTENTION BETWEEN THE KING AND THE ARCHBISHOP — POPULARITY OF BECKET — A MEETING OF BISHOPS AND NOBLES CALLED—BECKET'S BEHAVIOUR—RAGE OF THE KING—HIS DESIRE FOR RECONCILIATION—THEIR UNHAPPY MEETING—BECKET CONTINUES UNMOVED—POPE AND BISHOPS SIDE WITH HENRY—COUNCIL OF CLARENDON —PERIL OF THE ARCHBISHOP—BECKET BELENTS AND SIGNS THE PAPER.

WHEN the news of Archbishop Theobald's death reached Henry, Becket was with him. The King had longed for the moment, and it had arrived. The highest post in his kingdom was not too exalted for the man he loved and honoured. Turning at once to the Chancellor, he exclaimed: "It is my will that you should be Archbishop of Canterbury." Becket was greatly surprised. There is every reason to believe that he was entirely ignorant of the King's intention. His mind had been hitherto almost wholly given to secular affairs; and, in the honesty of his heart, he felt deeply how unworthy he was to fill so sacred an office. He could not believe that the King was indeed in earnest; and, pointing to his gay attire, he exclaimed: "A pretty saint, indeed, you mean to place over that holy Bishopric." But Henry was not to be moved from his purpose. Could he have foreseen the working of Becket's mind, and understood the full meaning of his words: "If I become the servant of the Church, I can no longer be *your* friend," he would have hesitated.

In order fully to understand Becket's conduct, I must endeavour to explain to you, as simply as possible, the state of the law in those days. In Saxon times the union between the Church and King, or the State, as we usually say, was very close; that is, the interests of both were one. But in Norman times the two interests became opposed. Lanfranc and the Conqueror certainly acted most cordially together; but William's policy was to make a division between the Government and the Church, while the quarrel between Anselm and the King tended to widen the breach, the one upholding the liberty of the Church, the other the authority and power of the Crown. The desire of the Conqueror was to make the power of the king ab-

solite. In these days, you know, the Lords and people of the realm meet in parliament, and as the advisers of the sovereign, they hold him to a certain extent in check; but in Norman times it was otherwise. The Parliament or Council formed by the King could be easily overruled by him, and made to submit to his authority. William foresaw that the bishops and clergy would never submit to be judged by the courts of law, which were so completely under the power of the sovereign; and therefore, as I have already told you, he unwisely, as it proved, permitted them to have courts of their own, where those of the clergy who had committed offences contrary to the law of the land could be tried. But the "secular" courts (or those belonging to the Crown) could have no power over the clergy. Henry II.'s desire, for many years, had been to alter the old Norman law in this respect; he wished to curtail the power and liberty of the clergy, and he knew that if he could once pass a law by which the clergy might be tried in his own law courts, his point would be gained. Becket knew the king's mind well in this respect, and therefore he forewarned Henry that if he became Archbishop his duty would be clear. As the Church's servant, he must uphold her authority to the utmost, and resist to the death the unlawful encroachment of the sovereign. We may object to the principle on which Becket acted, but in common honesty we must own that his conduct was consistent, and for the most part conscientious. Whatever cause he espoused, he was an enthusiast in it. As Chancellor, he threw himself warmly and heartily into the cause of his sovereign. Their interests were one. He felt in duty bound to do his master all loyal service. Now their interests would be severed, and the champion of the Church must become the enemy of the State. The private feelings of the Chancellor must give place to the public duties of the Archbishop, and Henry and Becket must be enemies.

You read a great deal about the gross crimes committed by the clergy; I am sorry to say that many of them led very sinful lives. But under the head of "clergy," I would have you understand all men who held any subordinate post in the Church were included, such as clerks, sextons, gravediggers, &c. Some of these men were wholly uneducated; and as they were frequently chosen from the lowest ranks, their conduct was often vile and coarse in the extreme. These men could only be tried by the "Ecclesiastical" or Church courts. And when I tell you that these courts had only the power of awarding slight punishments, you can understand that Henry naturally wished them to be tried in his own courts, where a punishment equal to

the offence could be awarded. If one of these so-called "clergy" had committed murder, the severest sentence their own courts could pass upon him was, to be degraded from his office, or confined for life in a monastery.

So far the King certainly had the right on his side ; but there is much to be said for Becket. Happily, in these days our courts of law are not dependent on the will or caprice of the sovereign, and we are content that clergy, as well as laity, when they do wrong should be judged in them, because justice is pretty sure to be impartially administered. But in Norman times the will of the king was absolute ; and Becket felt that to accede to Henry's wishes in this respect would be to endanger the little amount of liberty that the Church possessed. I hope I have now made my meaning clear ; an explanation of this sort was necessary, or I am sure you would not have understood the dispute between the King and the Archbishop, nor would you have seen clearly, as I wish you to do, that there is something to be said on both sides.

Although Becket had given Henry to understand that when he became Archbishop, his sense of duty to the Church would not permit him to further the King's views, the latter appears to have misunderstood or disregarded the Archbishop's words, and Becket refused any longer to continue his Chancellor. Henry was thunderstruck. His friend had become a changed man. After all the affection shown him by the King, we cannot but blame Becket for the heartless and abrupt manner in which he deserted him. Henry's affection was deeply wounded, and his fiery temper roused. He peremptorily commanded Becket to resign the archdeaconry which he had held with his chancellorship ; and the Archbishop was obliged, though most reluctantly, to consent. A new question now arose, which tended further to widen the breach. Certain favourite nobles of the Court had got possession of a portion of the estate which belonged to the See of Canterbury. Becket demanded that the land should be given back forthwith. It is only just to the Archbishop to state, that before his consecration he had drawn a promise from Henry that all such lands should be restored. He was therefore only asking what was right and just. The nobles, enraged at what they considered a gross injustice, did their utmost to prejudice the King against Becket. The worst construction was put upon all his acts ; his care to preserve the rights of the archbishopric was imputed to covetousness ; his zeal that the rules of the Church should be carried out was called rigour and cruelty ; and his contempt for popularity was attributed to affectation. In short, they tried to persuade the King that if

Becket was permitted to carry on his encroachments, the crown before long must totter from his head. Nevertheless, Henry was not a man to be easily persuaded to forget an old friendship, and in the year 1162, we find him staying at the Archbishop's palace, and holding friendly and affectionate intercourse with him, as in days gone by. Becket's palace was the resort of all the most agreeable and learned men of the time; his liberality was unbounded, while his cordial and affable manners endeared him greatly to the people, who appear to have felt the utmost affection for their primate. Unhappily, the peace between the King and the Archbishop was but of short duration. From this time an incessant warfare was carried on between them, and the country was divided into two parties. The officers of the State, the magistrates, the great barons, and nearly all the bishops sided with Henry. But Becket's was the popular cause, and in this lay his real strength. The common people regarded him as their champion, and adored and supported him accordingly. He was the man who, alone and unaided, stood boldly up to defend the liberties of the Church and people against the tyranny of the sovereign. In Norman times, this was quite enough to cause any man to be regarded as a hero and a saint. Besides, years ago, Becket, by his popular acts and affable bearing, had secured the affections of the people. His cause was their cause, the righteous cause of liberty and the Church.

Henry now made up his mind to carry out, at all hazards, his scheme with regard to the punishment of the rebellious clergy. He still fondly hoped the Archbishop would support him in this; but Becket was prepared to resist him to the death. His reasons for so doing I have already explained to you. Henry, finding Becket was not to be moved, although he had in the gentlest manner urged his request, summoned a meeting of bishops. His proposition was a reasonable one, and the bishops were relenting. Then Becket stood up. His stately bearing and impassioned eloquence were irresistible. He raised the war-cry, "The liberty of the Church," and the bishops gave way. The answer they gave the King was far from satisfactory. "They could not," they said, "agree to all the King demanded, but only so far as it was consistent with their duty to the Church;" to which Becket added: "We will conform to the usages of your kingdom in all things, *saving our order*." Henry's Norman blood was now up. He burst into an uncontrollable fit of rage, and with an oath exclaimed: "Nought shall ye say of your order, but my laws ye shall confirm and accept outright and in plain words." So saying, he hastily

withdrew himself from the meeting of the astonished bishops without the usual salutation. But Henry's anger was of short duration. Like the flickering firelight in a dark room, which seems now to sink into obscurity, and then suddenly appears again, gleams of past affection would return, and the King would relent towards his old friend. He resolved to seek an interview with Becket, and remonstrate with him. His desire was that it should be a private one; but Becket wished it otherwise, and when he arrived, surrounded by a magnificent suite, and mounted on a gorgeous palfrey, the King was amazed and displeased. "Have I not," said he to the Archbishop, "elevated you from a humble station to the very height of honour? Why, then," he continued, with a reproachful tone of entreaty, "have you forgotten all my favours to you, all my affection for you? Why have you, all of a sudden, become, not merely ungrateful to me, but my bitter opponent?" Becket was unmoved, and coldly replied: "No, my lord, I am not ungrateful for favours I have received, not simply from you, but from God through you; be it far from me, therefore, to show ingratitude. Remember how faithfully I have served you; but I may not, I cannot disregard the will of God to obey yours. In the great day of judgment we shall both be judged as the servants of the same Master, and one will not be able to answer for the other. We are indeed to obey our temporal lords, but not against God; for St. Peter saith: 'We must obey God rather than man.'"

Would such a speech as this tend to allay the irritation of a man who had really just cause for anger? Henry was furious; Becket was unmoved; and when the old obnoxious words once more rang in the King's ears: "As of old, as now, I am ready to obey your wishes, *saving my order*," the King's indignation knew no bounds, and the two friends parted in deadly hate.

The bishops now sided strongly with Henry, and the Pope, fearing lest this open rupture should affect his interests, urged Becket to accede to the King's wishes. Becket faltered, and at length reluctantly agreed. The King was determined to humble the pride of his obstinate prelate. "Publicly," he exclaimed, with bitterness, "you opposed my wishes; publicly you must yield your consent." A Council was held at the Castle of Clarendon, near Salisbury, and a paper was drawn up, which contained the laws or constitution Becket was to accept. He refused. Besides the matter with regard to the trial of the clergy, other clauses had been inserted, and to those the bishops objected also. The nobles sided with the King, and drawing their swords, swore to enforce their sovereign's authority. In those iron days threats were often put into execution on the spot; and the bishops in

alarm, now begged and entreated Becket to relent. He was but mortal; his brave and dauntless nature gave way, and in a moment of weakness he signed the paper. The bishops followed his example. The Archbishop had sacrificed the liberties of the Church, and the tyranny of the King was triumphant. Such was the popular view of the case.

CHAPTER IX.

HENRY II. *continued.*—1164 to 1170.

COMPUNCTION OF BECKET AFTER HAVING SIGNED THE CONSTITUTION OF CLARENDON—HE PROCLAIMS HIS PENITENCE—INDECISION OF THE POPE—BECKET ATTEMPTS TO LEAVE THE KINGDOM, AND FAILS—MEANNESS OF HENRY—PERSECUTION OF BECKET—INEFFECTUAL REMONSTRANCE OF THE BISHOPS—BECKET REMAINS FIRM—IS DEGRADED FROM HIS OFFICE, AND ALL HIS GOODS CONFISCATED—SYMPATHY OF THE POPULACE—BECKET ESCAPES FROM ENGLAND—CRUELTY AND LITTLENESS OF HENRY'S CONDUCT—BECKET RETURNS—HIS ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION AT DOVER—GREAT REJOICINGS AT CANTERBURY—UNWISE AND HASTY CONDUCT OF BECKET—RAGE OF THE KING—FATAL EFFECTS OF HIS HASTY EXCLAMATION—ANGRY INTERVIEW OF BECKET WITH THE ARMED KNIGHTS—FEARFUL SCENE IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL—MURDER OF BECKET—CONSTERNATION OF THE PEOPLE OF CANTERBURY—ESCAPE OF THE MURDERERS.

BECKET retired from the Council of Clarendon sick at heart and miserable. He was no coward, and the thought of his weakness and inconsistency maddened him. Where was the great principle for which he had been so long contending? It was ruined—and by the very man who was in duty bound to uphold and support it even to the death. What would his people think of his cowardice? In what light would God view his conduct? It was this last thought that so deeply pained the religious mind of Becket. He was no worldling now, and he poured out his feelings in bitter self-reproaches. "Proud, vain man that I was, how utterly unfitted to be the pastor of sheep! I, the patron of stage-players, I, the follower of hounds—I am called to be the shepherd of so many souls! Of a truth, my past life was very far from conducing to the safety of the Church; and now these are my works! I am deserted by God, and fit only to be cast out of the see I fill."* But Becket had learnt a lesson, and from this hour he became a deeply religious man. He solemnly swore to uphold the cause of truth and liberty, even if it cost him his life. No mortification was

* Herbert.

too severe for the repentant Archbishop. He proclaimed his penitence publicly, and absented himself from his sacred duties.* Becket's conduct produced the effects he hoped for; and the people saw and applauded their prelate's earnest repentance. In the meantime the Pope appears to have felt uncertain how to act, or whose part to take in the quarrel. He evidently wished to avoid offending either the King or the Archbishop. Becket, aware of his hesitation, determined to go to Rome, and urge his claim in person, hoping also that if he left the country for a time the King's wrath might subside. Becket embarked, but, like Anselm, he was breaking the law by so doing, and the sailors, fearing they should fall under the King's displeasure, brought the Archbishop back again to the English shore. When Henry next saw Becket he remarked, with a smile: "And so, my lord, you wish to leave my kingdom. I suppose it is not large enough to contain us both." But the King was really in no joking mood; he now determined to crush Becket, and the meanness with which he carried out this determination was most contemptible. By a series of the most unjust persecutions he hoped to make him resign his archbishopric; but the dauntless man with whom he had to deal was not to be thus easily terrified into submission. The King called a national assembly at Northampton, and Becket was summoned as a culprit before the peers. He was called on to answer the most unfounded charges. Amongst other things, Henry required him to account for all the sums that had passed through his hands while chancellor, although nearly all the money he possessed had been expended for the good of the King and the nation. Becket had no one to stand by him in his hour of need. The bishops all sided with the King; they dared not incur his displeasure. The Archbishop defended himself with a courage and skill that drew forth the admiration even of his enemies; but he had to struggle against immense odds. The King was victorious, and the proud spirit of Becket humbled. All his property was to be confiscated, and he would be reduced to beggary. But though the mighty and powerful were against him, the sympathy of the poorer classes was all on his side; and when his sensitive nature sank under the unusual excitement, and he was seized with sudden illness, the people flocked to his gates to proclaim their sympathy with the great man who was bearing all this for their sakes. On the last and most important day of the Council, the bishops waited on Becket, and using all their eloquence, prayed and entreated him to avert the king's wrath by resigning his archbishopric. Becket's

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 277.

answer showed that his lofty spirit was yet uncrushed. "My enemies," he bitterly exclaimed, "are pressing upon me; the whole world is against me. My chief sorrow is that you, who are the sons of my mother the Church, do not take my part. Though I were to say nothing, yet all future ages will declare that you deserted me in the battle—me, your father and Archbishop, sinner though I am." With these passionate words he concludes: "Be assured of one thing: though enemies shall press hard upon me; though this frail body yield to their persecution, because all flesh is weak, yet shall my spirit never yield, nor will I ever, by God's mercy, turn my back in flight, nor basely desert the flock committed to my care."

Thomas à Becket knew that the feeling of the people was all with him. They adored and respected the man whose open-handed generosity and kindness they had so often experienced. The Archbishop knew how to take advantage of this. On his way to the Council he proceeded, gorgeously attired in full pontificals, and attended by a numerous suite, to the Church. A large congregation assembled, eager to join in prayer with their persecuted champion. The full, rich voice of the Primate was heard chanting the introit, "Princes also did sit and speak against me;" and when, solemnly and with a most impressive air, he pronounced the benediction, all eyes were turned towards him. His tall figure, piercing eye, and handsome, yet determined countenance, fascinated the beholders; and as he passed with dignity through the streets on his way to the council-chamber, the common people thronged around him, and prostrating themselves as he passed, with tears and prayers besought his blessing. The king, alarmed lest the mob should proceed to extremities, ordered the castle gates to be closed, and as the Archbishop entered the portcullis fell. Possibly Becket thought his last hour was come. He grasped his crosier—the insignia of his office—firmly in his hand. The bishops entreated him to lay it aside, and not offend the King. The Bishop of London, in a most undignified manner, attempted to snatch it from him, but the Primate held it fast. "My cross," said he, "is the sign of peace; I will not let it go." It was a loud and angry meeting. Again, for the last time, Becket was urged to agree to the King's wishes. Alone and unaided he stood up, and with boldness and dignity declared that the signature he had placed on the paper at the Council of Clarendon was null and void. "I fell," said he, "for all flesh is weak; but I will, with the strength of God's Holy Spirit, resume my courage, and contend manfully with the foe. I pledged myself to what was unlawful; but an unlawful oath is not binding." Judgment was

then pronounced against Thomas à Becket. Found guilty of high treason and obstinacy, all his goods were to be confiscated, and he was to be deprived of his sacred office. After the sentence was given the Archbishop arose with calm dignity, and raising his cross aloft, prepared to quit the council-chamber. We cannot withhold our sympathy from the crushed and fallen man; he bore with dignity the insults thrust upon him. As he left the hall hoots, yells, and insulting epithets greeted him; but outside the castle the scene was changed. A long, loud shout of affectionate applause burst from the enthusiastic mob. They imagined their beloved Primate had been murdered; but he lived to distribute blessings on the people as he passed along.

The Archbishop's life was now in imminent peril. At this time he was not prepared to suffer martyrdom for his cause, and he fled in disguise to the sea-coast, from whence he embarked to France. Becket bore his six years of banishment with the fortitude worthy of a great man. The littleness of Henry's mind is certainly displayed during this period. All his old love for Becket had vanished. Provoked at the kindly reception which the King of France afforded the Primate, he banished all who were in any way related to him, and seized their goods.* Such base cruelty and spite did the King's cause infinite harm. Englishmen love justice; and when the wretched wanderers flocked for protection to their outlawed Primate, public indignation against the King was at its height. Becket in his extremity appealed to the Pope, who, with his usual caution, avoided giving a decided opinion, sometimes appearing to side with the King, sometimes with the Archbishop.

There is little doubt but that the misfortunes which now crowded upon the once exalted and admired Thomas à Becket were of infinite service to him. He became in his adversity an humbled and altered man, and led a life of true penitence and devotion. The fleeting honours of the world had lost their attraction for him, and he studied with all the energy of a loving heart to fit himself for a better home. Becket's popularity abroad was as great as it had been in England; and the King was pressed on all sides to attempt a reconciliation. Possibly time may in some measure have obliterated from Henry's mind the past miserable disputes. At all events, he seems to have deplored the unsettled state of his country during the absence of the Primate; and now he longed to heal the quarrel. After much wearisome negotiation, and a good deal of hesitation on

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 290.

the part of Becket, the difference was partially healed, and the exiled Primate received the King's permission to return to his Archbishopric. On the festival of St. Andrew, November 30th, 1170, Thomas à Becket landed at Dover. Thirty short days more, and he would be called on to give up his life in the cause for which he had struggled so manfully and so long. As the Archbishop's boat neared the shore, loud and prolonged was the cheering which greeted him. He approached the town bearing the cross in his hand; loving crowds thronged their spiritual pastor; and as he raised his hand in benediction, shouts of "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" fell on his ear. But as the Prelate approached his own city of Canterbury, popular enthusiasm was at its height. Followed by a magnificent train of attendants, the Archbishop entered the gorgeously decorated cathedral; the organs rang out a triumphant peal of welcome, while the people, with sobs of glad emotion, pressed forward to receive their beloved Primate's blessing. Becket, his face flushed with joy and exultation, prostrated himself before the altar, and offered up a fervent prayer of thanksgiving to God. Alas! how transitory was this scene of joy and peace! The Primate's days were numbered. Had he at this juncture shown common forbearance and caution, all might have been well; but in more than one instance he continued to rouse the King's anger and the hatred of the nobles. On Christmas Day—that glorious festival, when we commemorate the birth of Christ, when as our Saviour He came in all humility to take our nature upon Him—Becket preached from the well-known text, "On earth, peace, goodwill towards men." But, soon forgetting those words of love, he cursed, in awful and solemn accents, those who had made enmity between him and the King. We cannot excuse such words and deeds from a minister of the Gospel of Peace. But we must remember that the Norman age was not a refined age, and men often said and did violent things. In most instances, Becket could control his temper; but this unseemly yet momentary outburst was visited by a heavy retribution. The news of the Archbishop's unwise and haughty conduct quickly reached the King's ears. Then the man he had received again with open arms and trusted, was determined again to oppose and irritate him. The thought maddened Henry. Some one ventured to remark: "My lord, as long as Thomas lives, you will have neither good days, nor peaceful kingdom, nor quiet life." "Ha!" exclaimed Henry, bursting into a furious paroxysm of Norman rage, "is there then no caitiff in the whole of my broad realm that will free me from this low-born, turbulent

priest?" Fearful words these, and fearful were the effects they produced. On the 29th of December, Thomas à Becket knelt for the last time before the holy altar in Canterbury Cathedral, and received the blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. It was a solemn hour; he knew that danger was at hand, for the news of the King's anger had reached him. Four armed knights had come straight from the enraged King's presence; Reginald Fitzurse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Richard Brito, were his bitter enemies. The hour had come; his courage rose, and he prepared for the worst. At three o'clock he dined, and retired afterwards to his private apartment. Surrounded by loving friends, he conversed in his usual brilliant and agreeable manner. The conversation was suddenly interrupted. Four barons from the Court demanded an audience with the Archbishop in the King's name. "Let them come in," said Becket; but his flushed face and hurried manner betrayed his anxiety. The knights entered, but without the usual respectful salutation. An ominous silence reigned. Calm and unmoved, the Archbishop stood up. With a look of pity and contempt, Fitzurse murmured, "God help thee!" Becket could ill brook to be the object of pity to such a man; abuse he could have borne. His face flushed crimson. "We come to thee," said Fitzurse, "with the commands of your King from over the water." Among other things, Becket had been accused of disloyalty to the young Prince Henry. "The King has heard," continued Fitzurse, in an insulting tone, "that you have excommunicated the Archbishop of York, and the other Bishops, for crowning the young King; you must go at once to Winchester and perform your duty to our Lord the King." "And what am I to do?" rejoined Becket. "You ought to know better than we," was the indignant retort. "If I knew, I would not say I did not know," said Becket; "I believe I have ever done my duty to the King." "Not so," retorted Fitzurse; "there is much to mend; you have excited disturbances in this kingdom, and the King requires that you should go to him and answer for them." "Never," said the Archbishop, solemnly, "shall the sea again come between me and my Church, unless I am dragged there by the feet." "Go, then," said Fitzurse, "to the young King; take the oath of fealty, and swear to make amends for your treason."* Long and angry was the altercation. John of Salisbury, a firm friend of the Archbishop, dreaded lest his temper should give way, and tried, but in vain, to stop the angry debate. Becket was sorely tried. Hugh de Morville now accused him of treachery, in not having obtained the King's

* Stanley's Memorials of Canterbury, p. 78.

leave before punishing some of his men that had robbed him. The Archbishop now lost all command over himself, and exclaimed, with passionate haste: "You hold your head wondrous high, Hugh de Morville, but I tell you that when any man injures the Church, and refuses to make restitution, I shall wait for no man's leave to bring that man to justice. I will give to the King the things that are the King's, and to God the things that are God's." "Threats! threats!" shouted the knights. All order was now at an end. They sprang from their seats; they raved like madmen, tossing their mailed gloves into the air. Becket, too, forgetting the dignity of his holy calling, was wild with rage; his Norman blood was all on fire. "I know that you come to kill me," he roared, "but I make God my shield; you threaten me in vain. If all the swords of England were pointed against my head, your terrors could not move me from my duty; foot to foot, I will fight the Lord's battle. Once I went away, like a craven priest that I was; now I will stand to my post. If I cannot fulfil my priestly office in peace, then God's will be done." The knights rushed from the hall; Becket rushed after them, shouting: "Know this for certain, flee I never will; I defy your threats!" "Threats!" shouted back the knights, as they bounded through the gateway; "you shall have something more than threats from us!" But Becket's anger soon passed; and when John of Salisbury gently reproached him for having thus forgotten himself, he became calm, and received the rebuke with meekness. "Why," said his friend, "did you answer these men thus? they only seek your life, and therefore they try to enrage you." "We must all die," said the Archbishop, with reverent self-composure; "the fear of death must not prevent us from doing what is right. I am ready to suffer death for the cause of God and His Church." "Yea, but we are all sinners," rejoined the pious John, "and we have no right to wish for death without cause." "God's will be done," said the Archbishop.

Suddenly loud blows of an axe resounded on the massive door of the outer hall; a crash was heard; the armed knights had returned. The cowardly and affrighted monks rushed into Becket's presence, shouting: "They come! they come!" They entreated their Primate to take refuge in the Cathedral; the sanctity of the place would surely protect him from the violence of his enemies. But Becket stood firm. He refused. His brave spirit regarded with silent contempt the cowardice of his monks. He turned towards his friends: "All monks are cowards," said he; "I will not flee." But they disregarded his words, and notwithstanding his violent struggles, they pushed,

they dragged him by main force into the cloister. Here Becket contrived to free himself from their grasp, and with calm dignity ordered his cross-bearer to go before them, holding the sacred ensign. They approached the door of the holy building and entered. The sound of footsteps was heard hurrying after them along the cloister. The terrified monks barred the Cathedral door. Becket turned towards them, and exclaimed, with indignation: "Cowards! would ye make a castle of the Church! I came not here to resist, but to suffer. Open the door, I charge ye, and let my people in." With these words, Becket advanced towards the barred door, and with heroic calmness opened it. The knights, clad in full armour, and with swords drawn, were close at hand. No time was to be lost; the Archbishop was seized by his monks, and hurried up the steps to the altar. It was the time of even-song. The cold twilight of that dark December afternoon was fast fading into night. The tapers that flickered on the altar only made the darkness more visible. As the knights dashed through the open door into the transept, the chanting ceased, and the terrified monks and choristers fled to hide themselves in the many dark corners of the Cathedral, where all was utter obscurity. Becket alone stood firm. He was no craven now. His courageous English heart could face death and brave it. "Where is the traitor Thomas à Becket?" cried Fitzurse. No answer came; a solemn and awful silence reigned in the darkness. "Where is the Archbishop?" shouted Fitzurse again. "Here am I," answered Becket, with calm dignity; "no traitor, but a priest of the most high God, ready to suffer in the name of Him who redeemed me: what will ye do with me?" "Accede to the King's wishes," was the enraged reply, "or you are a dead man." "Nothing more will I do than I have done," answered Becket, with perfect self-possession; then in a tone of pathetic, almost loving entreaty, he continued: "Reginald! Reginald! I have done you many kindnesses; why art *thou* here, in this holy place, in arms against me?" "Thou art a traitor!" roared the knight, "and soon thou shalt know full well why we are here!"* Then a fierce scuffle ensued. The generous man thought not wholly of himself in that dread hour. "If it be my blood," he exclaimed, "that ye want, I am ready to die, that the Church may have liberty and peace; but in the name of God, spare my people." Fitzurse waved his sword in the air, shouting: "Strike! strike!" The Archbishop meekly bowed his head; he reverently joined his hands; he covered his face, and with a steady, unfaltering voice repeated the

* Southey's *Book of the Church*, p. 134.

words: "I commend myself to the cause of God and of His Church, and to the blessed martyr Elpege, and to all the saints of God."

At the very foot of God's holy altar the atrocious deed of murder was accomplished. The first blow was aimed at the archbishop's head; it fell on the arm of a noble-minded monk, Edward Grim, the only man who would not desert the primate in his extremity. The sword almost severed it, and slanting off, fell with fearful force on the head of the archbishop, inflicting a ghastly wound. As the blood flowed down his face, Becket murmured: "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Fitzurse again, and then De Tracy, aimed a heavy blow at the dying man. It felled him to the earth; he reverently clasped his hands, and was heard by the wounded Grim to whisper: "For the name of Jesus and in defence of this Church, I am ready to die." Richard Brito, eager to take his share in the bloody tragedy, raised his sword in the air. It fell with fearful force on the prostrate man; it cleft his skull, and broke in the pavement. It was the death-blow: the spirit of the gifted, admired, and dauntless Thomas à Becket had passed away. Great was the consternation that prevailed that night in the ancient town of Canterbury; a deed of such profane and daring atrocity had never before stained the Church. All honest-minded men were horror-struck; and as the monks kept vigil by the mangled corpse all through the long winter's night in the dark cold cathedral, a fearful storm of wind and rain raged without, which added tenfold to the public consternation. It seemed as if God were pouring out His wrath on the dastardly murderers, who, unseen by every eye but His, had mounted their steeds, and escaping in the darkness, were now miles away from the scene of blood and confusion.

CHAPTER X.

HENRY II. *continued.*—1170 to 1174.

HENRY'S GRIEF AND REMORSE WHEN INFORMED OF THE MURDER OF BECKET—HIS ACTS OF PENITENCE—SCENE AT BECKET'S TOMB—CHARACTER OF ARCHBISHOP BECKET REVIEWED—CONQUEST OF IRELAND—STATE OF THE CHURCH THERE—ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL—HIS SPIRITED REPLY TO THE ENGLISHMAN—DEATH OF HENRY OF BLOIS, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER—KING HENRY'S VISIT TO HIS DYING BED—THE BISHOP REPROACHES THE KING FOR HIS SHARE IN ARCHBISHOP BECKET'S MURDER—DOMESTIC TROUBLES OF HENRY—BURNING OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL—DISTRESS OF THE PEOPLE—ACCOUNT OF AN EYE-WITNESS—CHANGE IN THE STYLE OF BUILDING CHURCHES—NORMAN AND EARLY-ENGLISH STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE COMPARED WITH SALISBURY CATHEDRAL—CHANGE OF STYLE CLEARLY MARKED IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

WHEN the news of Becket's murder reached Henry, he was overwhelmed with horror and compunction. He would have given the most costly offering, yea, the crown itself, could he have recalled those few fatal words. But though he repented deeply of his passion, the consequences of it could never be undone. Henry was not a bad man; his intentions were good, and there is no reason whatever to think that he really wished for Becket's death. Is not the lesson this should teach us a most important one? Our affections may be warm, our intentions honest, and our religious feelings sincere; but if we forget to ask God's help in controlling our passionate temper, it will be sure to gain the mastery over us, when perhaps we least expect it; while one hasty word may destroy our happiness in this life, and endanger our souls in the next.

Henry's contrition was doubtless sincere: he broke into loud and passionate lamentations, and for some days remained almost stupefied, refusing all comfort or counsel. The stately figure of his once beloved and honoured friend seemed to haunt him everywhere; while the thought that he was the cause of his dreadful end added tenfold to the bitterness of his remorse. He caused it publicly to be proclaimed how deeply grieved he was at the murder of the primate; whilst he begged his clergy to pray that the fatal words he had so rashly spoken might not bring down upon his head the wrath of God. He further ordered a costly tomb to be raised to the memory of the murdered archbishop; and, in order to arrest the indignation of the people, and to show the sincerity of his repentance, he consented to be publicly flogged at the primate's tomb. A circumstance so unusual had never before happened. I think, therefore, it will interest you if I give you a short account of this

extraordinary proceeding. As Henry and his party approached the summit of the hill which overlooks the town of Canterbury, they saw, towering above the rest of the buildings, the stately Cathedral, with its three towers and noble west front. For a moment Henry's feelings overcame him : he had not visited the spot since the fatal night of the 29th of December, and now the whole scene rose up in fearful vividness before him ; but recovering himself, he leaped from his horse and entered the church of St. Dunstan, which stood just outside the town. Here the bishops who attended Henry stripped off his clothes, and in the guise of a penitent pilgrim, the great Monarch of England walked barefoot through the streets of Canterbury, followed by a wondering crowd. As he walked slowly along, the blood started from his wounded feet. At length he reached the door of the Cathedral, and after kneeling in prayer for a brief space in the porch, he went straight to the scene of the murder, where he knelt down and humbly pressed with his lips the spot where the archbishop had fallen. The bishops, who stood by, then received his confession. They then conducted the King to the crypt—a kind of cellar, or burial-place, under the Cathedral—where he again knelt, and with tears and groans kissed the tomb of Becket, and remained long in prayer. Then the Bishop of London arose, and addressing the monks and people, announced to them the King's sincere penitence for the fatal words of passion he had spoken, and his entire innocence of the murder of the primate. He then told them that the King intended faithfully to restore the rights and property of the Church, and to do all in his power to make amends for the late dreadful deed. Henry again knelt at the tomb ; this time his shoulders were bare. Each bishop and abbot present inflicted on the humbled monarch five strokes with a rod, while the monks, who stood by, followed their example. Then the bishops and all the people slowly retired, and left Henry alone in the cold dark crypt, full as it was of awful memories. Here he remained all night, without touching food, leaning against one of the rude Norman pillars.* Surely a mighty monarch like Henry II. would never have submitted to this public humiliation unless his repentance had been sincere.

I hope from all I have told you about Archbishop Becket, you have formed something like a just view of his character. I will only say a few words more before we finally take leave of him. All great men have their failings, and the faults of the greatest generally, I think, seem to stand out very prominently, partly perhaps because their enemies are glad to dwell upon and

* Stanley's *Memorials of Canterbury*.

make the most of them. At this distance of time it is therefore no easy task to form a really unbiassed and fair opinion of this remarkable man. His admirers, on the one hand, will see no fault in him at all, while his enemies, on the other, have done their utmost to blacken his character. Let us endeavour to avoid either extreme. No one can deny that Becket had many great qualities; his faults were rather those of his age. We find no littleness nor meanness in his character; all his acts, though we may object to them, were open as the day. He disliked Henry's conduct and policy, and told him so to his face; but he would have scorned to speak a word against him when his back was turned. Thomas à Becket possessed many of the noble traits of a true Englishman; but though brave, honest, and conscientious to a degree, he had often occasion to repent, in his calmer moments, of words said and deeds done when under the influence of an ungoverned temper. He was no lover of peace, and would concede nothing for the sake of it. He gloried in the struggle in which he was engaged; and, as it waxed fiercer and fiercer, all private feeling, all affection was forgotten, for the cause was not his own, but the cause of the Church, and of truth, and all else must bend to it. But I would have you bear in mind that Becket was no selfish man; perhaps he was one of the most unselfish men that ever lived. His acts prove this. He gave up all he held most dear—his early friendship, his property, his position, even his life—for the cause to which he had pledged himself. He cared little for his own authority, for his own advancement, but he was most jealous for the honour of his see and of his Church; and although some may object to the cause for which he fought, and may think it an unworthy one, we are bound in common honesty to admire the principle on which he acted. The man who is raised to a high position in the State is from that time forth a public man; and if he be truly honest, all private feeling will be made to bend to the public interest. It was this that made Thomas à Becket a truly great and patriotic man; and this it is that makes us forget in some measure the obstinacy of his character. On one occasion Becket refused to obey the law of the land, when he might have done so without sacrificing the interests of his cause. We must blame him for this. It was the law of England that the royal consent should be obtained before he quitted the country; and this consent he ought, without doubt, to have obtained. One more fact I would have you bear in mind. Becket was not a stanch upholder of the Papal See, as some would have us believe. He was too patriotic a man for this; and although, according to the custom of the age, he appealed to the Pope in his

distress, he did little to encourage the claims of the Church of Rome, or to bring his country under her dominion. Becket cared as little for the authority of the Pope as he did for that of the King, while his honest mind rejected with contempt many of the growing superstitions of the age.*

But I must now continue our history. Henry's fatal outburst of passion not only led to the commission of a fearful crime, but he failed, even after Becket's death, to gain the point for which he had so long contended. The laws he drew up at the Council of Clarendon were never passed. After the Archbishop's murder, popular feeling was so strong against Henry that he found it best to let the matter rest, so that things remained much in the same state as they were before the great contest. Becket had been extolled as a hero during his lifetime, but he was now doubly honoured, for in the eyes of the admiring people he had added a noble martyrdom to his other worthy deeds, while all his failings were forgotten in the glory of his heroic death-scene. It is an extraordinary fact, that for three centuries the scene of his martyrdom and burial attracted thousands of ardent pilgrims, who from every country flocked to Canterbury to show all honour to the memory of the great man who had suffered there, and to present their offerings at his shrine. In the course of our history I shall have to refer to this subject again.

Shortly after the events I have been recording, Henry was involved in a war with Ireland, which ended in the conquest of that island. I hope you have not forgotten the story of St. Patrick, and how he converted a great many of the Irish people to the Christian faith. An old writer,† who visited the island at this time, mentions that a few pagans were yet to be found there; and he blames the Irish bishops for being too lax and easy in their government. He evidently considers their faith was not worth much, for he quaintly adds: "From St. Patrick's time to the descent of the English, there hath not been found one martyr, which is a case rarely to be met with in any Christian country." But when, with considerable self-conceit, he reproached the Archbishop of Cashel with what he considered their want of religious fervour, the Primate appears to have known very well how to defend the honour of his people. He cleverly retorted on the conceited Englishman, and, at all events, appears to have had the last word in the argument. "The Irish," said he, "are certainly an uncivilized people, and too rough in their temper. Yet they always show veneration

* Churton's Early English Church, p. 333.

† Giraldus Cambrensis.

for their clergy. Their regard for a holy character has tied up their hands from outrage and cruelty ; but now," continues he, with a knowing glance at the Englishman, whose mind must have been full of the late startling events, "there is a people come among us (meaning the English) that has been used to murder without distinction, so that from henceforward I question not but that Ireland will have as many martyrs as other countries." The late barbarous murder of the English Archbishop was evidently in the Primate's mind when he uttered this pointed retort. Truly, no excuse could be found for a deed so utterly unworthy of a Christian people.

In the year 1172 the warrior Bishop of Winchester, Henry of Blois, died. The King, to show his respect for the venerable Prelate, hastened to his bedside, when he heard that his last hour was near. He hoped that the blessing of the dying man would ease his troubled heart ; but he was still to suffer the sharp pangs of remorse. The aged Prelate raised his hands, but not in benediction. With all the power of his expiring strength he reproached the King, in bitter words, for his share in the murder of the Primate. As Henry left the room he was heard to murmur : "Dying men, they rave out they know not what." But these words were doubtless used to hide his deep emotion. His proud spirit could not bear that those around him should witness his weakness. When we have done anything very wrong, God often in mercy sends us heavy trials, that our repentance may be the more deep and sincere, and that others may see that God hates sin, and punishes it. You remember when David so grievously offended God, He sent upon him one of the severest afflictions that any man could have to bear. The son that was dearer to him than his own life, and whom he had ever treated with the warmest affection, rebelled against his own father, and encouraged his subjects to take up arms. Such was Henry's case. The last years of his life were embittered by the disloyal conduct of his children. They encouraged the people to rebel against their lawful sovereign, while Prince Henry, the eldest, took the lead in this unnatural war. Just as the rebellion was becoming serious, and the country was about to be plunged into a dreadful civil war, Prince Henry was seized with a sudden illness, and expired before his father could reach his bedside, or receive his penitential entreaties for forgiveness. What a bitter trial must this have been for Henry ! The effects of those few passionate words would surely haunt him to the hour of his death.

In the year 1174, after a great deal of discussion, Richard, a monk of Canterbury, was elected to fill the vacant see. We are glad to find a man of moderate views and peaceable dis-

position filling this high office after the late scenes of disorder and contention ; but Archbishop Richard had no easy part to play. We often find that men of moderate views, and who are, to a certain extent, indifferent to the strife raging around, are unpopular. They please neither party, because both sides feel aggrieved that their cause is not upheld. Archbishop Richard, though he had been Becket's friend, differed from him in his opinions. He imagined he could best further the interests of the Church by remaining quiet, and going on steadily with his duties, instead of declaring himself the leader of a party. I must say I think such a character as this well suited to calm the public storm ; and though the writers of the time complain of Archbishop Richard's want of learning and apparent indifference, they feel bound to praise his prudence, his gentleness, and his amiability.

A sad public calamity occurred about this time. The finest part of the Cathedral at Canterbury, which pious hands had reared with such patient, self-denying labour, was reduced to a heap of ruins. On the night of the 5th of September, 1174, a lurid, flickering light was observed to glimmer through the Cathedral windows. The fatal cause was but too apparent. A prolonged shout of public horror rang from one end of the ancient city to the other : "The Cathedral is on fire !" In those days the poorer classes "loved the place where God's honour dwelt," for each man felt a personal interest in his Cathedral. He regarded it as his own property, considering it a privilege to be allowed, in his small way, to help in supporting it. As the lambent flames shot up high in the air, casting an unearthly glare on the surrounding trees and buildings, the monks and people pressed forward, and with ready and willing energy endeavoured to rescue their beloved Cathedral from the fire. It was too late ; the flames rose higher and higher. It seemed as if God would obliterate for ever the shameless deed of blood which had desecrated His holy altar. The handsome choir,* which had been the glory and boast of the citizens, was burning, and before long the greater part of the sacred building was a heap of blackened ruins. To convince you that I am not exaggerating the public grief and dismay, I will quote a short passage from the account of one who was an eye-witness of the calamity. After describing in eloquent terms the ruin of the Cathedral, he adds : "The people were astonished that the Almighty should suffer such things ; and maddened with excess of grief and perplexity, they tore their hair, and beat the walls and pavement of the Cathedral with their heads and hands. . . .

* The Choir of Conrad.

Many, both of laity and monks, would rather have laid down their lives than that the church should have so miserably perished." He concludes with the following quaint sentence: "That they might alleviate their miseries with a little consolation, they put together, as well as they could, an altar in the nave of the church, where they might *wail* and *howl*, rather than *sing*, the daily and nightly services." *

We have, wisely, perhaps, in our own age, learned to control our feelings better than our ancestors; but it is to be deplored that, in too many instances, we have crushed them altogether. Even an excited and mad outburst like this is far better than the cold, calculating indifference with which too many of us now regard such matters. We must not, however, forget that, as of old, so are there now many truly noble men, who come forward with open-handed zeal to assist in building and restoring the houses of God in our land.

Now that I am talking of the Cathedral of Canterbury, I will just say a few words about the style in which churches were built at this period. Towards the end of the reign of Henry II. a change took place in church architecture. During the reign of Richard I. the ponderous heaviness of the Early Norman gave place to a lighter and far more elegant style. Instead of round arches, and ornaments rudely cut with the axe, we see pointed arches, and mouldings beautifully carved with the chisel. Instead of large massive pillars, we have a number of small pillars, or shafts, as they are called, clustered together, which, although quite as strong as the massive columns, give far more grace and elegance to the building. Salisbury Cathedral, which was finished in the reign of Henry III., is a perfect specimen of this "Early-English" style.

After the great fire in Canterbury Cathedral, the people did not sit down idly in despair, but set to work in right good earnest to rebuild their church; and in ten years' time a far more glorious building arose, the greater part of which still stands; so you see good came out of evil. It is curious to see in this cathedral how distinctly the transition from the "Norman" to the "Early-English" style is marked. You can see the spot plainly where the remains of the old work ended and the new began. The rude axe-moulding and the delicately-carved chisel-work, the round arch and the pointed arch, stand, side by side, together. The windows of this style are simple, but in admirable keeping with the rest. The east window of the church, which is generally the grandest, is composed of three separate windows, rather high and narrow, the centre one

* Gervase, quoted by Dr. Hook, vol. ii., p. 526.

higher than the others. This style of lancet window is used throughout the building, and was filled with rich stained glass. The moulding at the top was deeply cut in the form of a row of dog's teeth. Whenever you see this kind of ornament round the arches or windows of a church, you may be sure it was built about this time. The monk whose account of the fire at Canterbury Cathedral I have already quoted gives also a glowing description of the improved manner in which the building was reconstructed. When you get older, and learn more about this interesting subject of church architecture, you will, I know, be pleased to read his account.

CHAPTER XI.

HENRY II. *continued*.—1174 TO 1189.

ACCOUNT OF THE FOUNDATION OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL AND ST. AUGUSTINE'S MONASTERY—RIVALRY BETWEEN THE MONKS OF THE CATHEDRAL AND ABBEY CHURCH—REASONS WHY THE ABBEY CHURCH WAS MORE POPULAR AT FIRST—FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE CATHEDRAL—ARROGANCE OF THE MONKS—THEIR RIVALRY WITH THE BISHOPS—MEETING OF THE MONKS AND BISHOPS IN LONDON—ELECTION OF ARCHBISHOP BALDWIN—INDIGNATION OF THE MONKS—HENRY'S SUBMISSION—THEY CONSENT TO BALDWIN'S ELECTION—HENRY'S SCHEME OF RETALIATION—BUILDING OF THE COLLEGE AT HACKINGTON—THE POPE SIDES WITH THE MONKS, AND PUTS A STOP TO IT—TROUBLES OF THE CHRISTIANS IN PALESTINE—EMBASSY OF THE PATRIARCH HERACLIUS—HENRY REFUSES TO HEAD THE CRUSADING ARMY—TRIUMPH OF SALADIN—HENRY ENCOURAGES HIS PEOPLE TO JOIN IN THE CRUSADE—FERVOUR OF ARCHBISHOP BALDWIN—PLENARY INDULGENCES.

BEFORE entering upon the events which occurred during the reign of Richard I., I must give you a short account of what took place at Canterbury during the last few years of Henry II.'s life. But first of all we must go back nearly six centuries, and call to mind one of the earliest and most important events in the history of our Church, namely, the landing of St. Augustine on the shores of Kent, and the subsequent conversion of Ethelbert and all his people to Christianity. I hope you have not forgotten the account I gave you of this great event; if so, I would have you turn to the eighth chapter again, and read it carefully through. After Augustine and his monks had established a Christian settlement in England, Ethelbert, with a zeal and unselfishness which would put to shame many a Christian in these days, gave up his gorgeous palace, that it might be converted into a Christian temple. The cathedral at

Canterbury stands on the site of the building, and is a lasting monument of Ethelbert's act of devoted piety. Little did he think, as Augustine knelt in that first Christian cathedral, and joined with him and his people in prayer, that for thirteen centuries the praises of the King of Kings would daily ascend to Heaven from that hallowed spot. A short distance from the cathedral church was a temple that had been used by the King of Kent and his retinue for their idolatrous worship before their conversion to Christianity. By the advice of the wise Gregory, Augustine purified this temple from the defilement of the heathen rites, and consecrated it to the service of the true God, naming the church after St. Pancras. Close to this church of St. Pancras, Ethelbert, by the advice of Augustine, built another noble house of God, which afterwards became famous as the abbey church of St. Augustine. Here Ethelbert was buried, and Augustine also, together with many of his successors. At first, peace and unity existed between these primitive Christian churches. The monks of St. Augustine's Abbey worked hand in hand with the clergy of the cathedral, vying with one another in deeds of usefulness. But, in after years, a good deal of jealous feeling existed between them. At first it is certain the cathedral stood second to the abbey church in the estimation of the people. There were many reasons why it should be so. Augustine, the great founder of Christianity among the Saxons, was buried, as I have said, within the abbey walls, together with several of the first archbishops of Canterbury, and Ethelbert, the first Christian King of Kent. In those days, when the bones and relics of famous men were regarded with a reverence approaching to idolatry, people loved and honoured the abbey church because it contained within its walls the bodies of these great men; and the fact that the abbot was always resident, while the archbishop, the head of the cathedral, was more often away, caused the people to feel more interest in the abbey church and less in the cathedral.* Up to the time therefore of which I have been writing, the monks of the Abbey of St. Augustine triumphed over the clergy of the cathedral, while their claim was upheld by the general voice of the people. But soon the case was altered. That great event, the murder of Archbishop Becket, which took place in the cathedral on the evening of the 29th of December, 1170, caused the building to be regarded with peculiar reverence, not only by the English people, but also by the whole of Europe. The scene of Becket's murder and burial became, as I have told you, the resort of pilgrims from every quarter, while the fame of the

* Stanley's Memorials of Canterbury, p. 193.

cathedral far outshone the glories of the abbey. The martyred Archbishop Becket became even more honoured than the great missionary, Primate Augustine. From the time these early missionaries landed in Kent and planted the Christian faith at Canterbury, that city had always been the grand centre of the religion of England; and this, together with the causes I have already named, made the monks of the cathedral church a very important body, and caused them to be regarded by the people with peculiar reverence. At all events, they claimed a vast amount of respect, and holding themselves above the bishops, they often behaved with great arrogance and selfishness. The jealousy and bickering between the monks and bishops rose to its height when a fresh archbishop was to be elected. The monks of the cathedral claimed the right of voting before the bishops; and in this claim they were supported by the Pope, who found them most active and useful in upholding his authority. Though many of the monks of the cathedral were excellent men, it is to be regretted that in so many instances they regarded their own dignity more than the peace and welfare of the Church. By their constant quarrels with the King and the bishops, they caused many an infidel to scoff at the religion of Christ.

The See of Canterbury was now vacant, and a fresh archbishop must be elected. In order to arrange the matter amicably, and avoid offending either party, Henry called a meeting of the bishops and monks of Canterbury in London. Gilbert, Bishop of London, a man of eminent holiness and learning, in right of his see, had the privilege of voting first. He chose Baldwin, Bishop of Worcester, to fill the vacant archbishopric. Baldwin had been formerly abbot of a Cistercian monastery, and as he was well known to be a consistent good man, all the bishops present gladly seconded Gilbert's choice. Unhappily, the matter was not to be so easily settled. The monks, considering themselves aggrieved at not having been allowed the first vote, obstinately refused to give their consent to Baldwin's election, and declaring they would appeal to the Pope, they angrily retired.

Henry knew full well the power of the monks and the importance of conciliating them. He was aware also that the Pope would support their authority against the bishops, and in that case there would be little chance of Baldwin's election. Henry therefore hastened to Canterbury. We are told that with streaming eyes, and on bended knees, he prayed the arrogant monks to agree to the bishops' choice. It appears that even the monks of Canterbury were not proof against the tears

of so powerful a monarch ; and on condition that the vote of the bishops should be considered null and void, they proceeded on their own account to elect Baldwin. He arrived at Canterbury, and was enthroned in great state. The "Te Deum," that majestic hymn we sing daily in our services at matins, was chanted with due solemnity ; and the monks, leading the Archbishop to the altar, saluted him on the cheek, which ceremony was afterwards performed by the King and his sons.* Henry, however, notwithstanding his tears and apparent submission, was enraged at the obstinacy and pride of the monks, and determined, if possible, to curtail their influence. In those days, however, this was no easy matter. Backed as the monks were by the support of the Pope and the reverence of their people, their power was great, and Henry had to wage a most unequal warfare. But, though his scheme failed, we cannot but admire the spirit with which he threw himself into it, and the cordial manner in which he and Archbishop Baldwin worked together. Their plan was this. At the village of Hackington, about a mile from Canterbury, they proposed founding a college of secular clergy, hoping thereby to check, in a measure, the influence of the monks. The Archbishop, a man of admirable taste, drew up a beautiful model of the proposed church and college.† It was to be erected in honour of Archbishop Becket, and therefore was sure to be in favour with the people.

It was some time before the monks became aware of the Archbishop's proceeding ; but when they did so, their indignation knew no bounds. As usual, they appealed to the Pope to redress their grievances. They complained that Baldwin had been thrust upon them by the tyranny of the King ; that in many instances he had shown his dislike to their order, and had even seized what was lawfully theirs. On the other side, it was urged with reason, that the monks had shown intolerable pride and perverseness, and ought not to be encouraged. While the dispute was going forward, the wily Baldwin hastened on the work, and so rapidly did it advance, that in a short time the church was completed and consecrated.

At this juncture the Pope interfered. As may be supposed, he strongly supported the cause of the monks ; and shortly afterwards Archbishop Baldwin received a menacing note from the papal see to pull down the beautiful new church, and proceed no further with the undertaking. The King and Archbishop were forced most unwillingly to comply with this unwarrantable demand ; so the noble design was blasted, and the buildings at

* Hoveden.

† Collier, vol. ii., p. 375.

Hackington were all destroyed.* Baldwin, however, with bold determination, removed the materials of the buildings to Lambeth, intending to build a monastery there, but he did not live to see it completed. What an idea this gives us of the growing power of the Pope—that he could withstand with success the efforts of so great a monarch as Henry, backed as he was by the combined support of the Archbishop of Canterbury and of all the prelates of his realm. I would have you bear in mind, however, that it was not without a severe struggle that the Pope gained this advantage. The monks were his powerful adherents; but the king, the Bishops, the people, and indeed the Church of England generally, nobly withstood his unjust and unscriptural tyranny, and boldly asserted their own freedom.

I hope you have not forgotten the account I gave you of the rise of the crusades in the fourth chapter. I think it would be well to turn to it, and read it once through again. After a great struggle, the crusaders expelled the infidels from the Holy City, and established a firm footing there. About this time, however, matters assumed a fresh aspect. No one who has read the history of England and the crusades will forget the name of Saladin—the brave and generous Mahomedan prince. With a mighty army of Saracens, all fired with a fanatical zeal for their religion, he appeared before the city of Jerusalem, threatening entire destruction to the whole Christian population. In his extremity, Heraclius, the Christian Patriarch, together with the Masters of the Knights Templars and Hospitallers, sent an embassy to Henry, entreating his support and assistance. Matthew of Westminster, a monk who wrote a history of this period, gives us an account of the interview. “When,” he says, “the knights had related to Henry the cause of their journey, they excited the King and all their hearers to tears for the unheard-of desolation of the Holy Land. They also with tears related to him the rash and wicked purposes of Saladin.”† From all accounts, Henry appears to have been easily moved to tears; but in this instance he wisely prevented his feelings getting the better of his judgment; and although the Crusaders brought him many costly presents, and even offered him the sovereignty of the Holy City if he would go in person and head their army, he cautiously refused—wisely judging that his Christian people at home had more need of him than the Christians abroad. Having taken counsel, he told the ambassadors that for him to accept the kingdom of Jerusalem, which they offered him, and go thither and desert the kingdom of England, and expose it to its hostile neighbours,

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 377.

† Matthew of Westminster, p. 73.

would not be, as he imagined, acceptable to God, since his kingdom was as pleasing to God, and as devout as the other. "So," continues Matthew of Westminster, "the Patriarch, being disappointed in his hope, returned to his own country; and when Saladin heard of this, he began in a most merciless manner to ravage those territories of the Christians which bordered on his own."*

Things were now assuming a most serious aspect. In the year 1187, Saladin attacked the Holy City, and utterly defeated the Christian army. He took Guy, King of Jerusalem, prisoner, and made himself master of most of the towns of the Holy Land. The whole of Europe was once more stirred from one end to the other, and all else was forgotten in the glory of fighting in a cause so holy.

Although Henry had refused to go to Palestine in person, he encouraged his subjects, both clergy and laity, to join in the Crusade. He had a powerful supporter in Archbishop Baldwin, who threw himself, with all the energy of an enthusiast, into the cause. Hugh, Bishop of Durham, with a great many other prelates, and almost all the earls, barons, and gentlemen of note in England, joined him and engaged in the service. Large collections were made to defray the expenses of the expedition, and people were encouraged by the Pope to join in it. He actually took upon himself to promise that all those who fought under the Christian banner should receive a plenary indulgence. In order to understand what is meant by a plenary indulgence, I must tell you that a belief had been gradually gaining ground in the Church that the souls of the just after death must, before they enter heaven, undergo a certain degree of punishment for sins committed in this life. An indulgence, as granted by the Pope, meant either a partial remission or putting away of this punishment, or else a full or plenary remission. Let us remember that the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory is, as our Article says, "a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture." But even had the doctrine of Purgatory been true, the Pope had no power to grant remission of sins upon such terms as joining a crusade. It is true that God has given power to His bishops and priests to declare and pronounce to His people the absolution or remission of their sins; but then it is only for those who are truly penitent; and we cannot be said to be truly penitent unless, by God's help, we try and forsake the particular sins which we have committed, and resolve for the future to amend our lives.

* Matthew of Westminster, p. 73.

I shall have more to tell you about the Crusades in my next chapter. I will now only add that King Henry died in the year 1189, and was succeeded by his son Richard.

CHAPTER XII.

RICHARD I.—1189 to 1192.

RICHARD'S BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THOSE WHO HAD JOINED IN THE REBELLION AGAINST HIS FATHER—HIS ARDOUR IN THE CAUSE OF THE CRUSADES—HE STARTS WITH ARCHBISHOP BALDWIN FOR THE HOLY LAND—THEIR DIFFERENT MOTIVES FOR SO DOING—CHARACTER OF BALDWIN—DISGRACEFUL STATE OF THE CRUSADING ARMY—BALDWIN'S ANXIETY TO INFLUENCE THE SOLDIERS FOR GOOD—HIS FAILURE AND DISAPPOINTMENT—HE DIES IN PALESTINE OF A BROKEN HEART—DISTURBED STATE OF ENGLAND DURING THE ABSENCE OF RICHARD—LONGCHAMP, BISHOP OF ELY—HIS UNPOPULARITY—DISLOYALTY OF PRINCE JOHN—LONGCHAMP LEAVES THE COUNTRY—DETERMINATION OF RICHARD TO RETURN HOME—HE IS SEIZED AND IMPRISONED BY THE DUKE OF AUSTRIA—RICHARD'S CHARACTER IS IMPROVED BY AFFLICTION.

RICHARD, as well as his brothers, had joined in the unnatural war against his father. He appears, however, sincerely to have repented of his undutiful conduct. A writer of the times says: "He hated all the clergy and laity that had deserted to him from his father, and would not admit them to any degree of favour. But those who had been firm to their duty, and followed his father's fortune, he made them part of his court, rewarded their loyalty, and put them into posts of honour and trust." *

I am pleased to be able to show you that he tried to make amends for his bad conduct. But though he did what was right in this case, we shall see he sadly failed in his duty afterwards. Before his father's death Richard had thrown himself with ardour into the Crusades. All his energies were centred in the cause, whilst he showed but little interest in anything else. Matthew of Westminster tells us that, "on hearing of the disasters of the Holy Land, he was seized with great consternation of mind; so that without waiting for the preaching of any one, or for the advice of his father, he before all the nobles received the sign of the cross from the hand of the Archbishop of Tours, murmuring at and reproaching his father because he declined to take upon himself the defence of the kingdom which was offered to him, thus shamefully shaking the yoke of the Lord from off his neck." † All this doubtless

* Hoveden.

† Matthew of Westminster, p. 75.

sounded very brave and adventurous; but it would have been far better for England, and for Richard also, had he remained at home, as his father did, and performed the less glorious, but more necessary duties that awaited him in his own kingdom. We may be sure of this: our highest duty ever consists in doing the work that God places immediately in our path; and although we may long, as Richard did, to go out of our way to perform some grand work for God, we shall really show our devotion to Him more by performing with willing hearts our everyday duties. By acting thus we shall have far less temptation to pride; our motives are more likely to be true and good. There is nothing brilliant in the daily effort to overcome our temper, or the patient struggle against unknown difficulties. There is little fear of our doing such things for the sake of others' praise, because such efforts would most likely be hidden from our fellow-men; our sole motive, therefore, should be to please God. But our pride is flattered and self-raised when we do some great act which makes us famous in the eyes of the world at large. Let us take warning by Richard. We are so accustomed to read of his dauntless courage and open-hearted generosity, that we fail to perceive his faults. One or two brilliant qualities seem to hide his failings. It will be useful for us to see in what way he failed to do his duty as king of England.

No sooner was Richard crowned, than he made preparations to start in person for the Holy Land. It is to be regretted that the good Archbishop Baldwin determined on going as well. I would, however, have you bear in mind that, although Richard and Baldwin both agreed on taking this unwise step, their motives for so doing were very different. Before taking any important step we should always consider whether our motive for acting is a pure and a right one, otherwise our work, however pious in itself, will be worthless in God's sight. To be pleasing to Him, it must be undertaken in a right spirit. According to the notion the Pope encouraged, Richard may have imagined he was making amends to God for his former sins by joining in the Crusade; but his chief motive for so doing is clear. Caring but little for God's approval, he thirsted for the glory and praise of men. He knew he could best secure this by heading a noble army of knights and barons, and performing prodigies of valour among the infidel ranks. Archbishop Baldwin's aim was a far higher one. He was a man of loving and compassionate nature. The accounts he received of the suffering and wickedness of his fellow-countrymen in Palestine stirred his pious heart, and he determined to go in person to the Crusades, hoping, by his preaching and holy

example to influence the army for good. From all accounts, it is evident that this was the real motive which induced Baldwin to join the expedition; nor should we despise him and Hubert Walter, the good Bishop of Salisbury, because they buckled on their armour and fought bravely for the Holy City and their own divine faith. Baldwin, though now an aged man, still possessed all the fire and vigour of a brave soldier, and he wielded his sword with good effect. We frequently find that the bravest men often possess the most gentle and sensitive nature, and so it was with Baldwin. He left the shores of England full of hope. Strong in faith that God would bless his undertaking, he longed for the hour when he could move from tent to tent, exhorting and teaching the lawless army of crusaders. He had undertaken a great work, and he determined to do it with all his might; but he little knew the terrible difficulties which would beset his path. Christians only in name, the greater part of the crusaders shamed their sacred profession by the commission of crimes that would have made even the heathen blush. A rougher and less sensitive nature than Baldwin's might have worked on steadily, regardless of all obstacles; but when the Archbishop found that his fervent preaching and consistent example failed to influence the worthless men for whom he had resigned all his comfort and ease, his loving heart sank beneath the bitter disappointment. Early and late this good pastor might be seen exhorting and warning his erring flock; but his gentle temper could ill bear the brutal coarseness of the men with whom he was thrown, while his pure mind shrunk from the constant scenes of blasphemy and sin which surrounded him. A martyr to the cause, his weak body sank under the unusual excitement, and he never again saw his native country. Archbishop Baldwin died in the year 1191, and was buried in that distant land. The following touching words, uttered while the fever was upon him, show that death was indeed welcome: "O Lord, my God, such need is there here of chastening and correcting with Thy holy grace, that, if it please Thy mercy, may I be removed from the turmoil of this life. I have remained long enough with this army."

While Richard was performing prodigies of valour in the Holy Land, his country was in a sad state of disorder and confusion. Before setting sail for Palestine, Richard had appointed William Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, his chancellor, confiding the care of the greater part of his kingdom to him. Hugh, Bishop of Durham, however, had charge over all the northern part of England. Longchamp, from all accounts,

appears to have been unpopular with all parties. He managed to offend Earl John, the King's brother; and by showing favour to the secular clergy, he was hated by the monks. Many were the complaints urged against him by his enemies. Among other things, he was accused of extravagance and intolerable haughtiness. Longchamp, as Chancellor, certainly appears to have considered it his duty to keep up a vast amount of state and grandeur. His palace was the resort of the noble and great, while his table was daily furnished with every dainty. We may not altogether blame the Bishop for this. As the King's representative, it was only fair that he should rank above the rest of the nobles and prelates; but although they might have been willing to put up with a certain amount of arrogance in the King, they were not prepared to submit to this in his Chancellor. They determined on his ruin, while Earl John, longing to grasp the kingdom for himself, gladly supported them. The fact that so worthless and disloyal a prince as John was his enemy speaks well, I think, for the Chancellor. It certainly shows that although in some instances he may have shown a want of judgment and humility, he had regard for the good of his country, and the honour of his lawful sovereign. Longchamp, finding his enemies too strong for him, was forced to fly the kingdom in disgrace. During his exile he sent the King and Pope a melancholy account of the hardships and injustice he had endured, and further hinted that Earl John intended to seize the kingdom for himself. This alarming announcement appears to have brought Richard to a sense of his duty. He determined to bid farewell to the scene of his brilliant successes, and to return to his duties as King of England. But God wisely judged that a thoughtless character like Richard's required affliction to make it more stable. Richard Cœur de Lion little imagined, as he sailed from the shores of Palestine, that several years of weary imprisonment awaited him in the dismal dungeon of the Duke of Austria. But the lesson of adversity was not thrown away upon him; and when once more he was permitted to return to his despised and neglected country, we may hope he had learnt to value and love it. You see how much misery Richard brought on himself and on others by neglecting in the first instance his plain duty.

In the meantime the Bishop of Ely managed to influence Pope Celestine strongly in his favour. This Pope sent an angry letter to the English prelates, menacing them with his angry displeasure; but the time had not yet arrived when the English Church would slavishly consent to own the universal sovereignty of Rome. The bishops treated Celestine's "Bull"

with the utmost contempt, and actually proceeded to seize the property of the Chancellor for the King's use.* In the meantime some of the nobles visited Richard in his captivity. The account they brought to the captive monarch of the state of his affairs was anything but cheering. Earl John had now broken out into open revolt. But Richard, in his misfortunes, had learnt submission. He cared much less now for fame and honour; and instead of bursting out, as his father would have done, into a paroxysm of rage, he merely expressed grief and surprise at his brother's ingratitude, but no ill-feeling appears to have rankled in his heart. Affliction had taught Richard a valuable lesson. In his silent dungeon he had thought of his neglected country, and had planned for her good. The see of Canterbury was vacant; and the fact that Richard wished to appoint a man well worthy of this high post proves that he lacked neither judgment nor right feeling.

CHAPTER XIII.

RICHARD I. *continued.*—1192 to 1199.

HUBERT WALTER, BISHOP OF SALISBURY—HIS CHARACTER—HIS INTIMACY WITH ARCHBISHOP BALDWIN—WISE INFLUENCE OVER THE KING—HIS ENERGY AND WISDOM—INTERVIEW WITH SALADIN—DETERMINATION OF RICHARD TO PROPOSE HUBERT AS ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—WISDOM OF THE CHOICE—THE MONKS OF CANTERBURY CONCILIATED—THEY CONSENT TO ELECT HUBERT—HIS PROMPT MEASURES AS JUSTICIARY—HE COLLECTS A SUM OF MONEY FOR THE KING'S RANSOM—THE POPE INTERCEDES WITH THE DUKE OF AUSTRIA FOR RICHARD'S RELEASE—HE RETURNS TO ENGLAND—HIS GENEROUS CONDUCT WITH REGARD TO HIS BROTHER JOHN—DIFFICULTIES OF HUBERT—REBELLION OF THE CITIZENS OF LONDON—WILLIAM LONGBEARD—HIS CHARACTER—PROMPT MEASURES OF THE ARCHBISHOP—HE RESIGNS HIS OFFICE OF JUSTICIARY—DEATH OF RICHARD—ENCROACHMENTS OF THE PAPAL SEE—REASONS WHICH FAVOURED THE CLAIMS OF THE POPE IN ENGLAND—THE ENCROACHMENTS OF THE POPE REACH THEIR CLIMAX IN THE REIGN OF KING JOHN.

You may remember I told you that Hubert, Bishop of Salisbury, had started with Archbishop Baldwin to the crusade. These two men fought side by side, and were warmly attached to one another. But though the same spirit animated them both, their characters were very different. Hubert was a man of deep piety, and a practical, far-seeing man of the world as well. The trials and disappointments which brought the sen-

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 396.

sitive Baldwin to the grave only nerved the brave heart of the Bishop of Salisbury to fresh exertions. He saw and appreciated the difficulty, and, regardless of the apparent hopelessness of the task, he went steadily on with his work, and in the end received his reward. Among other wise and good deeds, he contrived to influence the careless mind of Cœur de Lion for good. The Bishop, with his usual penetration, seems to have discovered the good points in the King's character, and to have drawn them out. Like a wise man, he did not disgust Richard by condemning as sinful all his amusements and deeds of valour; but by his consistent example, and by the cheerful yet strictly moral tone of his conversation, he encouraged his sovereign to admire and love what was really good. In this respect I think you will agree with me, that Hubert had learnt the real secret of true influence. Shortly after he had followed his beloved friend, Archbishop Baldwin, to the grave, Richard was seized with sudden illness. The crusading army, deprived of their gallant leader, was in imminent peril. But Bishop Hubert, by his wise counsel and prompt measures, contrived at this critical juncture to bring about a truce between Richard and Saladin, the Mahomedan prince. Richard knew and valued Hubert's tact and wisdom, and therefore entrusted this delicate business to him. There is a very interesting account given of an interview between this Christian Bishop and heathen warrior. Saladin, though an infidel, could appreciate Hubert's high qualities, and nobly treated him with every respect. Saladin was anxious to hear from the Bishop's lips a true description of the character of his brave opponent, King Richard, for he had the generosity to admire his courage and frankness. Of course the Bishop duly extolled his friend and sovereign; but, like a true Christian man, he could also honour what was true-hearted and noble even in a heathen. "With respect to my King," said Hubert, "I may truly say that he has not his equal among knights for deeds of valour, or for liberality in his gifts." Then with courtesy he added: "I can say also, in my humble opinion, if you, my Lord, were converted from your unbelief, there could not be in the world two such princes as King Richard and yourself."*

It speaks well for the character of Richard, that he could value the man who had not feared to tell him of his faults. When his courtiers informed him of the miserable state of his kingdom, and the revolt of his brother John, he wisely considered that no man would be more fitted to protect his interests and calm the storm than Hubert Walter, Bishop of

* Dr. Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, vol. ii., p. 595.

Salisbury. He therefore determined, if possible, to promote him to the See of Canterbury, and to make him also Justiciary, that is, a kind of Chief Justice, during his absence. The nobles and bishops of England most willingly seconded the King's choice; but the monks of Canterbury had to be conciliated and won over, and this Richard knew to be no easy task. The matter was managed by him with considerable adroitness.* He wrote to the monks, urging them at once to appoint a successor to Baldwin, as the troubled state of the kingdom called for no delay in the matter. At the same time he sent a letter to the queen-mother with private instructions to the bishops to go at once in a body to Canterbury to plead his cause. The King knew well it was useless to threaten the monks into submission; but he hoped that the quiet persuasion of the bishops might have some effect on these captious men. Hubert was a crusader, and popular; so the monks knew that to object to his election would call down upon them a storm of opposition. The King's proposal came upon them suddenly. They had no time to invent a grievance against the Bishop of Salisbury, even could they have done so. After some consultation they therefore proceeded to elect Hubert, who was accordingly consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. The new archbishop proved well worthy of the confidence placed in him by his royal master. His first act was to head an army against John. His attempt was successful, and he managed to conclude a truce with the rebel prince. But Hubert's chief aim was to effect, if possible, the King's liberation. He knew that there could be no real peace for England while her lawful sovereign was absent. He therefore strained every nerve to raise a sum for the King's ransom. But it is doubtful whether Richard would ever have been released, had not Pope Celestine interfered in his behalf. At a critical juncture, he sent a menacing letter to the Duke of Austria, demanding the instant release of his royal prisoner. This letter, together with the enormous sum collected by the English, had a due effect on the grasping, cowardly Duke. He reluctantly consented to release Richard; and on the 13th of March, 1194, Cœur de Lion once more stepped on his native soil. I have shown you that Richard had many grave faults; but he possessed some noble qualities also. Affliction had made him a wiser and far less selfish man. His generosity of disposition was specially shown in his conduct towards his brother John, who had been disloyal and ungrateful in the extreme. Richard generously refused to cherish any feelings of malice towards him, and shamed his cowardly brother into submission

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 399.

by forgiving him freely and fully. Yet the words he addressed to his mother show that he was well aware that John's heart was still estranged from him. "I forgive him," he exclaimed, "and may I as easily forget the wrong he has done me as he will forget my pardon."

In the meantime, Hubert acted with great wisdom in his office of justiciary; but at times the duties of this post, combined with all the cares of his archbishopric, were almost more than even his energetic nature could perform.

Among other difficulties, a great disturbance arose among the poorer people of London, which, but for the prompt and energetic conduct of Hubert, might have proved most serious. It appears that Hubert demanded of the citizens of London a certain sum to meet the expenses of the war which Richard was carrying on in France. The people determined to resist what they considered a most unjust tax. I think it most probable they would have consented to assist their sovereign in his difficulties, had they not been persuaded by a bad man to resist all lawful authority. William Fitzosbert, or "Longbeard," as he is generally called, was one of those worthless characters who, regardless of consequences, take advantage of the credulity and ignorance of the people, to prejudice them against their superiors. Longbeard tried to persuade his misguided followers that he was their true friend and champion, while in reality he proved to be their enemy. Although a man of frivolous mind, he could make what the mob considered a very fine speech. Forgetting that God has set both rich and poor in His Church, that the one may be a mutual help to the other, Longbeard, like many men of the present day, persuaded his ignorant listeners that the rich and noble were all haughty and worthless, and that their chief delight was to oppress their poorer brethren. In some instances this, I fear, was true; but Longbeard had no right to condemn a whole class because some of its members failed to do their duty. Had this man really cared, as he professed to do, for the happiness of the people, he would have tried to make them contented "with that state of life to which it had pleased God to call them," instead of rousing their evil passions, and making them discontented, idle, and wretched. As is usual in such cases, they failed to gain their point. Hubert saw the gathering storm, and, alarmed lest the people should rise in open rebellion, seized their treacherous leader, Longbeard, and caused him to be executed, together with eight of his party. This act may seem to you harsh and cruel, but in reality it was a merciful one. The rebellion was stopped, and the people saved from a bloody war, which must have ended in

the destruction of many innocent lives. The citizens now gladly consented to own the authority of their sovereign, and found that there was more true freedom in submitting to lawful rulers, who in time of need had the power of protecting them, than in following their own wilful and unrestrained passions. Hubert Walter was now an old man, and, wearied out with his many cares, would gladly have retired into private life; but Richard knew his value too well to permit this, and resolutely withheld his consent. The matter was afterwards compromised by Hubert resigning the office of justiciary, and retaining the post of Archbishop. In the year 1197, Richard died from the effects of a wound caused by a poisoned arrow, and, unfortunately for his kingdom, left no children to reign after him.

Before concluding this chapter, I must just say a few words about the great power which the popes of Rome now possessed. Notwithstanding the opposition of the bishops and people, the encroachments of the papal see reached their climax in the reign of King John. As I have already told you, many circumstances which no earthly power could have controlled contributed to this result. In Saxon times the people could look to their king and parliament for redress of grievances, but under the Norman sovereigns it was far otherwise. Oppressed by the tyranny of the King and the pride and lawlessness of the barons, the wretched people turned in their extremity to the Pope, and gladly hailed him as universal Father. True Christians have at all times shrunk from division and discord; and the grand idea of one all-powerful and universal bishop, around whom the Church of God could cling, was easily fostered in those unsettled times. But there was one thing which perhaps more than anything helped on the encroachments of the Pope. The numerous orders of monks which arose at this time all adhered firmly to the Pope, and unhappily supported his unlawful authority against the lawful claims of their primate and bishops, thus causing a sad division in the Church, and giving the Bishop of Rome a firm footing in England. I would not, however, have you imagine that the monks were always to blame. No doubt they often behaved with folly and arrogance, as the monks at Canterbury did; but in a quarrel there is generally fault on both sides; and probably the monks found it sometimes almost impossible to live at peace with their bishop, if he happened to be a tyrannical Norman. As we proceed with our history I shall have to tell you of the sad evils which arose from this notion of the Pope's universal supremacy. But I would have you bear in mind that God permitted this great power to arise for some

wise purpose. Had it not been suited to the state of Europe at that period, it would never have been permitted to exist; and though in itself a sad abuse, it possibly prevented some greater and more terrible evil, which the world in its short-sightedness could never have foreseen.

CHAPTER XIV.

KING JOHN.—1199 to 1207.

CHARACTER OF PRINCE JOHN—REASON WHY HUBERT WALTER AND MANY OF THE BARONS CONSENTED TO OWN HIM AS THEIR LAWFUL SOVEREIGN—HIS CORONATION—COMPLETION OF THE COLLEGE AT HACKINGTON—SYNOD AT WESTMINSTER—CHURCH SERVICES—ELOQUENT PREACHING OF THE ABBOT OF FLAI—OPINION OF THE CHURCH ON THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY—DEATH OF ARCHBISHOP HUBERT—HIS LAST WORDS—HIS CHARACTER—CRAFTY CONDUCT OF THE MONKS OF CANTERBURY—THEY ELECT REGINALD, THEIR SUB-PRIOR, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—FAILURE OF THEIR SCHEME—ELECTION OF JOHN DE GRAY—INTERFERENCE OF POPE INNOCENT—HE RECOMMENDS STEPHEN LANGTON—THE MONKS UNWILLINGLY CONSENT TO HIS ELECTION—INNOCENT TRIES TO CONCILIATE JOHN—THE KING'S INDIGNATION—HIS VENGEANCE ON THE MONKS OF CANTERBURY.

A MORE worthless prince than King John never sat upon a throne. In almost all bad characters we can find some redeeming points; but in him the evil seems almost entirely to overpower the good. His history affords us a mournful proof of the depravity of the human heart. Though a Christian by name and profession, John was worse than a heathen. Light shone around him; but of him it might be justly said, that he "loved darkness rather than light, because his deeds were evil." Terrible indeed will be our condemnation if we wilfully reject the opportunities God places in our way, and if when our Lord "stands at the door and knocks" we refuse to open. The Bible tells us that for such as "sin after they have received the knowledge of the truth there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment."* Awful words these. Well will it be for us, in this Christian land, to lay them to heart. But we must try to do justice even to a man like John. Modern historians always regard this prince as an usurper. His cruel conduct to his nephew Arthur certainly admits of no excuse; but there appears to have been at the time many who considered his title as rightful heir to the throne a just one. One thing surprises us: that a man like Hubert

* Heb. x. 26, 27.

Walter should have supported his claim, and even placed the crown upon his head. He has been much blamed for this; but before we decide against this great man, or accuse him of disloyalty, we must try and live, as it were, at the time, and place ourselves in his position. First of all, Hubert was supported by some of the best and wisest nobles of England. According to our notions, John was an usurper, but not according to theirs; and we are bound to respect the opinion of those who lived at a time before our own. We must also remember that the base points in John's character were not as yet fully known; few bad men commit gross crimes at first; they begin by indulging in small sins, and then go on from bad to worse. So it was with John; the full infamy of his character was as yet unknown. Again, the best men saw, in the unsettled state of the country, the necessity for a firm rule. They dreaded lest the old civil wars of King Stephen should return, if they allowed a child like Arthur, only twelve years of age, to hold the reins of government. We are distinctly told also that Richard on his death-bed named his brother John his heir, to the exclusion of his nephew.* So that you see there is a good deal to be said on the side of the archbishop. His consent to John's coronation was most important, as his example induced a great number of the barons, and most of the bishops and people, to acknowledge John as their lawful sovereign. He was crowned at Westminster on the 25th of May, 1199.†

You remember the dispute about the College of Hackington in King Henry's time, and how Archbishop Baldwin, frustrated by the Pope in his attempts, removed the materials of the church and monastery to Lambeth, hoping to erect them there. But hitherto the jealousy of the monks had hindered the completion of this good work. In the year 1200, however, Archbishop Hubert managed to compromise the matter. The monks permitted him to build the college and church at Lambeth, on condition that he placed unmarried monks or canons regular in it, and never consecrated bishops there.‡ So the troublesome monks were satisfied, and the matter settled at last. Soon after John's accession a synod was held by Archbishop Hubert at Westminster, when several wise laws were passed for the good of the Church. He seems to have provided that the Church services should be performed "decently and in order," wisely judging that the mass of the people would never be encouraged to reverence holy things, if the service of God were performed in a careless and indifferent manner. In the quaint yet expressive

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 409.

† Matthew of Westminster, p. 95.

‡ Collier, vol. ii., p. 411.

language of the time, it was enacted: "That the prayers should neither be huddled over, nor drawn out to a sleepy negligence, either of these extremes being most unsuitable to the solemnity of the office." Even in our time such a canon as this would not be without its use. Our ancestors had discovered the wisdom of a middle course in such matters.

Before I pass on to other subjects, I think it will be well to mention the effect caused by the earnest preaching of a certain Eustace, Abbot of Flai, who came over to England and tried to do good in the reign of King Richard. In the year 1201, he returned to this country, and passing from city to city, astonished all who heard him by his earnestness and eloquence. His chief aim appears to have been to rouse the people to a due observance of the Lord's Day. It seems they had fallen into the habit of holding fairs and markets, and doing all kinds of work on the Sunday. Against this evil custom the Abbot of Flai strongly protested, and enforced his teaching with various anecdotes and quaint tales. Such a style of preaching, doubtless, proved most attractive to the poor and ignorant; but whether the abbot did wisely in bringing himself down to their low taste in order to raise them, is, I think, a matter of some doubt. Certainly many of his tales seem hardly in character with the sacredness of the subject; but his intention was pure and right, and therefore such a man claims our respect, although we may not quite approve of his mode of proceeding. We may hope that the eloquence of the Abbot of Flai had due weight with his hearers, and that the favourable impression produced by his sermons did not die out after the excitement was over; for it but too often happens that the religious fervour produced by very stirring and rousing sermons is followed by corresponding coldness and indifference. It must, however, be borne in mind that the best bishops and clergy encouraged Eustace to preach. It is quite wrong to suppose that the Church permitted the desecration of the Lord's Day; a writer of the time, whose opinions were shared by many others, thus expresses himself: "God Almighty hath invited the people to the observance of the Lord's Day; but they, fearing more the human power than the Divine, and dreading more to lose earthly things than heavenly, and things transitory than things eternal, have, oh, shame! like a dog to his vomit, returned to the holding of markets on the Lord's Day."* So you see this writer tells us such was not always the custom, nor was it approved of.

Archbishop Hubert died in the year 1205. I think I have said enough about him to show you he was a noble-minded,

* Hoveden.

talented, and patriotic man. He always influenced King Richard for good ; and many of the useful laws passed in that King's reign were drawn up under his able direction.* He delighted in good architecture, and erected many fine churches and palaces in different parts of the country, thus giving the people a taste for what was most useful and beautiful in art. These churches were built in that true and noble style which then prevailed, and which I explained at the end of my tenth chapter—a style admirably suited for places of Christian worship, or indeed for any other building. The Christian spirit which shone forth in this good man's life is evinced in his dying words to his monks : “ I would have you,” he says, “ dearly beloved, examine yourselves, that ye may discover wherein ye have done wrong, and with a view to amendment therein. When, by God's will, I shall be dead, you should devote all your endeavours to promote the honour and usefulness of your church. If I have offended any of you, I ask your forgiveness ; and such as have offended me I heartily forgive. Believe me, my beloved brethren, I am more sorrowful for your troubles than I am for my own.” The writer who gives us these words further adds : “ Archbishop Hubert was so hospitable, so liberal, so bountiful in providing for the poor and wayfaring, that his income seemed common property.” A truthful man himself, he hated deceit in others ; and we are told that, “ He attached to his service such persons only as he discovered to be truthful in deed and word.” Like Solomon, “ The treacherous lips, and lying tongue, and deceitful mouth did he hate.”†

I must now enter upon the struggle which began between the worthless John and his barons. It is so closely connected with the history of our Church that I must not pass over it, although you may have read about it before in your History of England. I feel sure, however, that I shall be able to teach you a good deal you have not yet learnt. We must first turn to Canterbury. The monks this time determined to have the election of the new Primate all to themselves ; and although it was contrary to the law of England, they proceeded to instal Reginald, their sub-prior, to the office, without even consulting the King or the bishops, or even letting them know anything about the matter. This absurd and deceitful proceeding was conducted with the utmost secrecy. At midnight the procession wound into the Cathedral, chanting the Te Deum. It moved slowly towards the high altar, behind which the monks placed Reginald, the sub-prior, seating him in the Archbishop's chair of state. By this treacherous act the wily monks hoped to prevent

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 114.

† Gervas.

the King from nominating any other man; and, in order to make the matter sure, they sent Reginald in person to the Pope, to conciliate and win him over. Here, however, their scheme failed. Reginald, a foolish, conceited man, forgot the strict injunctions given him by the monks to keep his secret; and with bragging words he boasted that he was Primate of England. His insignificant appearance and pompous manner exposed him to the ridicule of the Pope; while his absurd conduct so disgusted the monks that they made up their minds to proceed with the election in the regular way, and give up their conceited favourite. Fearing the wrath of John, should he discover their plot, they gladly consented to nominate the man he selected, John de Gray, Bishop of Norwich. But some of the Cathedral members appear to have been affronted; and declaring they would not consent to the election of the Bishop of Norwich, they laid their complaint before the Pope. Pope Innocent III., clever, unscrupulous, and ambitious, gladly seized this opportunity of strengthening his cause in England, and therefore refused to sanction the election either of Reginald or de Gray. But it is only justice to Innocent to state, that the man he recommended to John was, in every respect, most worthy of such honour. The name of Stephen Langton must ever be held in veneration by all true-hearted Englishmen. At a critical juncture, it pleased God to raise him up that he might control the power of a base and unscrupulous sovereign, and secure to England the liberties she still enjoys. But the Pope had to conciliate both King and monks. As you may suppose, he soon contrived to win over the latter. "Stephen Langton," said Innocent, "is an Englishman by birth, a man of deep wisdom, elegant person, faultless morals, a fit and sufficient person, as far as man can be, to govern the Church; his promotion will be most advantageous to the King, and indeed to the universal Anglican Church."* The far-sighted Innocent well knew the character of the man he brought forward; but the crafty monks, now that it suited their purpose, urged that it was not lawful for them to consent to Langton's election, unless the King agreed to it. But the Pope was not to be so easily cajoled, and with ready wit he took the words out of their own mouths, as Matthew of Westminster tells us: "Ye know," said he, "that ye have plenary power in the Church of Canterbury; inasmuch as ye are selected as the first men in your convent, ye have no need to wait for the consent of princes to elections which the Apostolic See hath confirmed. Therefore we command ye, by virtue of your obedience, and under the penalty of anathema, to

* Matthew of Westminster, p. 106.

elect him Archbishop whom we give you to be shepherd of your souls." The same writer adds : "The monks then being in a strait, fearing the sentence of excommunication, though unwillingly and grumblingly, nevertheless gave a consent, such as it was." Stephen Langton was accordingly consecrated, and enthroned in state ; but Elias de Brantefield, one of the monks, who appears to have favoured the cause of the King and the Bishop of Norwich, doggedly refused to take any part in the service ; and while the others, with a loud voice, chanted the *Te Deum*, he kept a resolute silence, refusing to open his lips.

Pope Innocent now proceeded to win over King John, but this was a far more difficult matter. With his usual tact, he knew pretty well the kind of man with whom he had to deal. Open to flattery and full of avarice as John was, Pope Innocent imagined he could best be conciliated by fair words and costly gifts. He therefore sent the king a present of four magnificent rings, set with valuable jewels, and a letter filled with flattering words and complimentary speeches. At the same time he recommended Langton as a man well worthy of the dignity conferred on him, a native of England, and likely to prove a blessing to the country. But John, after feasting his eyes for a time on the jewels, threw them aside ; nor were the compliments more successful. John was not a stupid man. He possessed a good deal of his father's clear-sightedness and wit ; and he knew enough of Stephen Langton to see that, high principled as he was, he was just the man to oppose and thwart him in all his lawless and tyrannical schemes. He therefore sent an indignant refusal to the Pope, and prepared to vent his wrath on the unlucky monks of Canterbury. They little knew, when they consented to the election of Langton, the character of the sovereign with whom they had to deal. Cruel, unscrupulous, and void of all right principle, John cared neither for God nor man ; and as for the monks who, up to this time, claimed reverence even from kings, he set them at defiance. John disdained to fall on his knees, as his father had done, but took far more effective means to bring the monks of Canterbury to submission. Great indeed must have been the amazement of these proud men when two armed knights, breathing vengeance, and followed by a band of soldiers, thundered at the door of the monastery, demanding instant admittance in the king's name. With drawn swords, the brutal men John had selected for this business rushed into the presence of the affrighted monks, and commanded them instantly to depart the kingdom ; otherwise they vowed to fire the monastery, and burn them and their cloister to ashes. The alternative was a fearful one. The

monks knew it was no vain threat. They were not prepared to suffer martyrdom, and fled, leaving their deserted monastery to bear living witness to the king's triumph.* But even in the dastard heart of King John we may discover at times a spark of religious feeling. The citizens of Canterbury were not to be deprived of their lofty cathedral services. The king provided that the praises of God should still continue daily to be sung in the sacred building; but it must have added not a little to the mortification of the banished members of the cathedral when the news reached them that their monastery was filled with monks transported from the rival Abbey of St. Augustine.

CHAPTER XV.

KING JOHN *continued*.—1207 to 1213.

CONCILIATORY MEASURES OF POPE INNOCENT—RAGE AND DEFIANCE OF JOHN—SAD EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THE INTERDICT—EFFECT UPON JOHN—HIS CONDUCT TO THE CLERGY—THE POPE EXCOMMUNICATES HIM—STORMY INTERVIEW WITH PANDULPH, THE POPE'S LEGATE—JOHN'S BRUTALITY—HIS CRIMES AND UNPOPULARITY—TRAGIC STORY OF DE BRANSE—INDIGNATION OF THE BARONS—JOHN'S SUBMISSION TO THE POPE—FEELING OF THE CHURCH—STEPHEN LANGTON SIDES WITH THE BARONS—HIS CHARACTER—HIS NOBLENES AND PATRIOTISM—SUBMISSION AND REPENTANCE OF JOHN AT WINCHESTER—HE IS ABSOLVED BY THE ARCHBISHOP AND PRELATES—HIS FAIR PROMISES OF AMENDMENT.

It was now Pope Innocent's turn to retaliate; but, to do him justice, he first tried to bring John over by gentle means. He sent the three bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester, to beg the King to allow the monks to return, and also to accept Stephen Langton as archbishop. The request, though gently urged, was most unpalatable—John flew into a violent passion, and interrupting the bishops in the midst of their harangue, exclaimed, with a profane oath: "Think ye that I care for pope or cardinal; if any man dare to interfere with my dominions I will seize the estates of the Church, and send bishops and clergy all packing to the Pope. Ha!" he exclaimed, with a coarse laugh, "and I tell ye, if any Roman caitiffs be found in my domain, their eyes shall be plucked out and their noses slit, that all men may know them by this distinction; depart ye from my presence," he cried, pointing his finger, all trembling with rage, at the bishops, "or by my crown, ye shall carry some

* Matthew of Westminster, p. 107.

mark of infamy along with you." The bishops knew full well that the reckless man in whose presence they stood seldom threatened without performing; so they wisely withdrew themselves from his presence. But Pope Innocent knew his own strength, and was not slow to use the weapons he had at his command. He was determined to humble the unscrupulous king, and he did it most effectually. At this period, the power of the pope was unbounded, and the startling maxim which the ambitious Innocent upheld: "That the Church owes no reverence to any one but the Pope, who has no superior but God," was gradually gaining ground throughout a large part of Christendom. Innocent's plan was this; he laid the whole kingdom under an interdict. In these days it is difficult to realize the misery which such an act would cause. But I will try and explain it as well as I can. An interdict was a kind of curse, pronounced by the Pope. As soon as it was given forth, all religious ordinances were instantly put a stop to. The Church bells which were wont to ring so merrily throughout the length and breadth of the land, inviting the people to worship God in His house, were silent. No taper was lighted. No service performed. No Church open. The dead were buried, like dogs, by the roadside. No blessed words of hope were uttered over their graves. The holy ordinance of marriage was solemnized outside the Church doors; and infants were baptized by stealth. Could an interdict be possible in these days, I fear a large mass of the people of England would care but little at being deprived of their religious privileges; for do they not, in many cases, refuse to use the means of grace, when they are brought to their very doors? It is a painful fact that when the Church bells of our home ring gladly over field and forest many of our poorer brethren turn a deaf ear to the holy summons. That Church, where rich and poor meet together (for the Lord is the Maker of them all), is no Church for them. They bear their heavy burthen of toil and poverty unaided, for they refuse the blessed helps which God holds out to them, and which, if rightly used, would surely lighten their load. The worship of their Heavenly Father is a weariness to them, and the Holy Sacraments unmeaning rites. But for the most part it was not so in days gone by. The faith of the Church then was closely bound up with the interests and business of the people. The poor revered and loved a system which could protect them from the violence of the rich; while toil and hardship were often forgotten as they knelt in prayer in God's house, and obtained the strength they asked for and needed. If any doubt that it was so, let them read of the misery caused

by this interdict. The clergy and people suffered alike. The priest toiled on, often amid discouragement and without the blessed hour of rest and refreshment which the daily service afforded him; while the gate of the friendly monastery was closed, so that the naked and starving knocked in vain for admittance.

Loud were the complaints throughout the land. One man alone cared nothing for all this. The reckless John seldom attended the services of the Church, and now that they were removed, it mattered little to him. But he did care for his own honour, and his indignation knew no bounds.* He ordered all to depart the kingdom who obeyed the Pope's interdict, and proceeded to seize the revenues of the Church. Those of the clergy who remained could claim no protection from the law. Any man had liberty to plunder or abuse them. On one occasion, a villain who had robbed and murdered a priest was brought before the King. John ordered him at once to be released, exclaiming: "He has killed an enemy of mine; untie him and let him go!"†

Finding the interdict fail, Innocent now determined to resort to stronger measures still. He excommunicated John himself. Hitherto the Pope's anathema had not reached the King; but now he felt the full force of the papal wrath. He was a marked man. Like the leper of old, none dared approach him. His most intimate friends shunned the society of the man on whom the curse of God rested. King John was left alone to vent his rage on himself. The expressive language of the time thus describes his condition: "None were allowed to eat, drink, talk, or associate with the King, and not even to do him service at bed, board, in Church, hall, or stable." Proud Norman blood flowed in John's veins; and although the humiliation must have been almost more than he could bear, he still defied the Pope. Some time after, when the emissaries of Innocent came into the King's presence, hoping to adjust the difference, they were astonished to find John, as usual, surrounded by a brilliant court. The King inquired their business. They answered: "We only want common right, and that your Highness should swear to make satisfaction to Holy Church, and return all that you have seized. His Holiness further desires that you accept Stephen Langton for archbishop, and recall the banished prelates." This was a sore point to touch upon, and John was in no mood, after all he had suffered, to grant any such request. With a look of stern anger, he exclaimed: "Ye may oblige me *to return what I have seized*, but as for that Stephen, be he

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 421.

* Ibid., vol. ii., p. 422.

secured by never so safe a conduct, I will hang him as soon as he sets foot in my dominions." After some debate, Pandulph, the Pope's legate, who headed the party, rose and spoke. His were no words of peace. "From this day," he exclaimed, "we excommunicate all those who shall communicate with you." "Have you anything else?" asked the King, with a sneer. "I have," continued Pandulph. "We absolve all the clergy and laity of your dominions from their homage and allegiance, and we give your earls and barons leave to make war upon you; and, let me add, his Holiness intends to send an army into England, that all may repair to him, and fight under his banner." "Have you anything more to menace?" said the king. "Yes," was the answer; "we tell you in the name of God, that from this day forward neither you nor any of your heirs can wear the crown." Though in a towering rage, John could indulge in a coarse pun. "I was informed," said he, "that you were my friends, but now I find things quite otherwise. But," said he, with an oath, "had you come into my kingdom without being sent for, I should have disposed of you to a *post* you would not have liked, and made this your last piece of mischief." "We well understand the language of your oath," retorted Pandulph, with provoking calmness; "you might as well have sworn at once that you would hang us. We came into this kingdom with the prospect of suffering martyrdom, nor did we expect any better usage from your hands." And so the conference ended. But the crimes of this base man began to cry aloud for vengeance. The cruel murder of his nephew had alienated the hearts of all the best of his subjects from him; while many darker deeds of sin and cruelty had already disgraced his short reign. It was his custom to seize as hostages the sons of those nobles he suspected of treason, however unjust such suspicion may have been. But the more powerful of his barons, we are told, refused to deliver up their children to him, exclaiming, with just indignation: "How can we expect him to preserve our sons and dear children, who are not at all akin to him, unhurt, when he wickedly slew with his own hand his own nephew, by that kind of death which is called murder."* In one instance these sad misgivings proved but too correct. John ordered a number of these innocent boys, whom he had dragged from their parents, to be hanged on a gallows at Nottingham.† But I have something to tell still more sad even than this. William de Branse was a powerful baron; he had large possessions and great wealth; but he was good as well as rich. He believed that God had given him his wealth in trust, that it might be

* *Matthew of Westminster*, p. 108.

† *Ibid.*, p. 109.

employed by him in holy and charitable purposes. He and his good wife Matilda gained the affection and respect of both rich and poor, by their kindness, charity, and consistent lives. They were blessed with a numerous family of promising children, whom they carefully trained in the right way. It was a happy and united household; but sorrow and death were close at hand. Matilda was commanded to give up her cherished and first-born son as a hostage; but some indulgence was to be allowed him in consideration of his high birth. He was to attend as page on the person of the King. But Matilda was a brave and a religious woman. She feared that if her boy went to dwell at the court of the dissolute king, he would learn to love the sin and vice which reigned there. So Matilda de Branse refused. The vengeance she must have dreaded and foreseen was indeed fearful. The merciless king, enraged at the affront put upon him, sent forth his cruel order, which was instantly obeyed. The noble-minded woman was starved to death, together with all her innocent little ones. William de Branse, her bereaved husband, escaped in disguise to France. He died not long after, at Paris, of a broken heart.*

Can we wonder that the outraged Barons of England gladly hailed the Pope's permission to make war on such a man? They fought in a righteous cause—for the liberties and lives of those most dear to them, their helpless wives and little children. It was now John's turn to quail. His humiliation was close at hand. He had once dared the Pope like a brave man; but now he bowed before him an abject coward. Bad men are always cowards; they dare not face the wrath of those they have wronged; and so it was with John. In his hour of extremity he looked in vain for a friend. He cared nothing for the freedom of his country; and, as a last resource, he determined to make Pope Innocent his friend. But this could not be done without many and important concessions. Innocent was not the man to lose so good an opportunity of strengthening his authority in England. He determined to humble the King first, and to make him feel his weakness, and then he would help him to crush the brave and patriotic men who only demanded justice. John's submission was contemptible in the extreme. Matthew of Westminster thus describes his conduct. "He resigned his crown to Pope Innocent, and did homage to him, making a slave of a country that had been perfectly free, in such a way that a prince of many provinces became subject to tribute, drawing up a deed with reference to it, which was a mournful *and hateful one to all who heard it.*"† I would have you notice

* *Matthew of Westminster*, p. 111.

† *Ibid.*, p. 116.

that these words were written by an English monk who lived at this time; and they prove to us without doubt that by many of the clergy of our Church, at this period, the claims of the Pope were not encouraged.

Pope Innocent had now gained his point; he was acknowledged by King John supreme in England; but the English people hated their craven monarch, and bravely struggled for the liberty of their Church. But though the Barons were brave men, and had the right on their side, they were as yet divided among themselves; and therefore it is doubtful whether they would ever have contended successfully against King John and the Pope, had it not been for one master-spirit, who counselled them with true wisdom, and entered with promptness and energy into their schemes. John had been compelled to accept Stephen Langton for archbishop. He had not misjudged his character. Langton was an Englishman by birth, and a man of whom England might well be proud. He possessed those noble qualities which we admire in all true-hearted, God-fearing Englishmen; combining in his character the truthfulness and love of freedom of the Saxon with the refinement, learning, and tact of the Norman. In every sense of the word, Langton was a true patriot; his love for his country was intense. He allowed no pleasure nor occupation to interfere with his duty. A learned man, like Anselm, he delighted in books and study; but even this favourite pursuit was relinquished when his country called for help and counsel. Langton was a warm and sincere admirer of the character of Archbishop Becket. He revered the devotion and firmness of the martyred primate, his love for the people, and his hatred of tyranny. Langton could easily overlook the faults of the man who had died to uphold the freedom of the Church; while he shared the opinion of the age, that Thomas à Becket was a patriot and a saint. But Langton possessed all the devotion and energy of Becket, without his obstinacy and want of tact. He would be loyal to a sovereign who regarded the laws of his country; but when those laws were broken with impunity, Langton considered it his duty to uphold and enforce them. He behaved with reverence to the Pope while he kept his ambitious claims within bounds; but although he was Innocent's friend, and owed his promotion to him, he bravely headed the patriots when Innocent would enslave the English Church. In every age, a man like Stephen Langton is a blessing and honour to any country.

King John at first promised fairly. Finding that the King of France was about to attack England, and that his barons and people were leagued against him, he turned in his extremity to

the Archbishop. Hastening to Winchester, where Langton and many of the bishops and clergy were assembled, he threw himself at their feet, and with tears and abject groans begged them to have compassion on himself and his kingdom, which still lay under the Pope's interdict. The unwonted misery and abasement of the King had a due effect on the prelates. They were even moved to tears; and leading their humbled sovereign through a vast crowd of astonished citizens to the Cathedral, they there absolved him in form. No one could have promised more fairly than John. Holding in his hand the sacred Gospels, he solemnly swore "to love Holy Church, and its ordained members, and that to the utmost of his power he would defend and maintain them against their enemies; that he would renew all the good laws of his ancestors (especially those of King Edward the Confessor); that he would annul bad ones; judge his subjects according to the just decrees of his courts, and restore their rights to each and all." These words sounded fair and hopeful; but, like Pharaoh of old, John's heart was hardened; for he had no love for God, nor any real principle to guide him.

CHAPTER XVI.

KING JOHN *continued*.—1213 to 1216.

JOHN RETURNS TO HIS EVIL WAYS—THE INTERDICT IS WITHDRAWN—THE BARONS RISE IN ARMS—LANGTON'S WISDOM—HIS ADVICE TO THE BARONS—HE SHOWS THEM THE CHARTER OF HENRY I.—THEIR APPROVAL OF IT—JOHN'S WILY CONDUCT—THE ARCHBISHOP AND BARONS COMPEL HIM TO SIGN MAGNA CHARTA—HE SWEARS TO ABIDE BY THE LAWS—HIS UNPRINCIPLED CONDUCT—POPE INNOCENT EXCOMMUNICATES THE BARONS AND CITIZENS OF LONDON—THEIR CONTEMPT FOR THE POPE—INNOCENT'S HARSHNESS TOWARDS STEPHEN LANGTON—DEATH OF KING JOHN—ST. FRANCIS AND ST. DOMINIC—DEPLORABLE STATE OF THE KINGDOM DURING JOHN'S REIGN—RISE OF THE MENDICANT ORDERS—EVILS AND ADVANTAGES OF THE SYSTEM—FERVOUR AND DEVOTION OF THE FRIARS—CORRUPTION OF THEIR SYSTEM IN AFTER YEARS.

Few characters are more dangerous than those which combine cleverness and acuteness with an utter want of all religious principle. Such was King John. He at all events could not plead ignorance or stupidity as an excuse for his sins; for he possessed a good deal of the wisdom and learning of his father, but he lacked most of the higher qualities of Henry. He showed little affection for any one. His conscience became *hardened*; and when he found his evil deeds had estranged all *right-minded men* from him, he sank deeper and deeper into the

mire of sin and depravity. He had chosen his own path, and it was the "broad road that leadeth to destruction." In 1213, the interdict, which had hung over the kingdom like a dark cloud for six years, was withdrawn. But John, forgetting the solemn oath he had taken to abide by the laws of his country, returned to his old ways. He had now secured the powerful support of Pope Innocent; so he thought he could defy his barons at pleasure. But the patriotic Langton proved more than a match both for king and pope. It is not my intention here to enter upon the prolonged struggle which took place between John and his barons. This you have already read about in your history of England. But I must dwell for a short time on that great event which took place on the plains of Runnymede, and which secured to our country the free laws which it is her blessing to enjoy.

We hear a good deal about the wisdom and resolution of the barons in compelling King John to sign Magna Charta; but little is known of the great and good man who directed their councils and secured us our liberties. The barons were now in arms against their sovereign; but Langton considered the person of the King sacred. He hated warfare. The steps he took to check the King's tyranny were both wise and prompt. He called a large meeting of the prelates, abbots, and barons in London. Privately, we are told, he withdrew with a few of the most influential barons, and suggested to them an excellent expedient for recovering their ancient free laws. "See," said the Archbishop, "what I have in my hand: it is the Charter of King Henry the First. This instrument will direct your demands upon the crown, and put you in the way of reclaiming your liberties." Then Langton proceeded to read out to them the several laws contained in this charter; they were no new ones of his own making (although a few were afterwards added, to suit the necessity of the case), but such as had been held sacred, both by king and people, from the early Saxon times. The barons were overjoyed. They listened with wrapt attention, as Langton clearly, and with befitting dignity, pronounced each separate law. When he had ended, a loud shout of triumph arose from those brave English hearts; and they solemnly swore before the meeting broke up to venture their lives, when time should serve, in a cause so righteous and true.*

For a long time John managed to put off the just claims of his people. He cunningly objected that the thing they asked was too hard, and that it required some time for deliberation.† *At last, however, the Archbishop's patience was exhausted; and*

* *Matthew Paris.*

† *Matthew of Westminster, p. 121.*

in the year 1215 he headed a large meeting of the prelates and barons in a meadow called Runnymede, near Windsor, at which he compelled the King to be present. After considerable hesitation, John at length consented to place his signature to the famous Magna Charta. The false prince once more solemnly swore to keep these laws; but as soon as the barons had withdrawn he burst into his usual coarse, derisive laugh, exclaiming: "Why do not these men at once demand my kingdom?" The struggle was a severe one, for John had a powerful ally in the Pope. If there were any at that time in England who still imagined that Pope Innocent had the good of their country at heart, they must now have been undeceived. It is clear that his sole object was to enslave our country, and make our brave people bow down to his unjust and unlawful authority. So soon as the late event at Runnymede reached the ears of Innocent, all his friendship for the man he had raised to the Archbishopric was forgotten. "Stephen Langton," he exclaimed, with passionate haste, "hath so much misbehaved himself, both to the King of England and the See of Rome, that he shall suffer for his presumption." The Pope was as good as his word; he suspended the Archbishop, and excommunicated the patriotic barons for what he was pleased to call "their treasonable rebellion against himself as lawful sovereign of England."* He then wrote to the bishops to withhold from their primate all canonical obedience. But Langton had gained firm hold on the hearts of his patriotic followers, and the Pope's command was set at nought. The Bishops treated Innocent's excommunication with the utmost contempt. "How comes the ambition of the Romans," they said, "to make so large a grasp, and reach into our island? what have these apostolic prelates to do with the direction of our arms? These people, who understand griping and simony much better than the grounds of war, will needs make themselves absolute by their spiritual authority, and domineer over the world with their excommunications."

The citizens of London, who were included under the Pope's ban, showed their cordial approval of this indignant remonstrance by ringing the bells all over the city, to express their contempt for the Pope's anathemas.†

It is clear from all I have told you that unless King John had been a weak and a bad man the Pope would never have dared to interfere, as he did, with the freedom of the English Church. Unhappily, John's system was followed, in after years, by most of our weak sovereigns, who, having alienated their own subjects, made an agreement with the See of Rome to protect

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 442.

† Matthew Paris.

and uphold them; so that, by this means, the Roman pontiffs gained, what they had long desired, a sure footing in England. But the unworthy author of all this trouble was soon to meet with a just recompense. In the year 1216, King John, overpowered with sorrow and remorse, was seized with a sudden fever, and died a few days after at Newark Castle. There were few who regretted their base and cruel sovereign. Yet it is but just that I should mention the only good deed that is known of King John. He founded the Abbey of Beaulieu in Hampshire, and several other monasteries in different parts of England.

Before I pass on to the reign of Henry III., I must tell you something about a new order of men which about this time arose in the Church. I mean the Mendicant Friars, as they were called. In this small history I should not have space to give you an account of the lives of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic, the founders of the two chief orders of Mendicant Friars, the Franciscans and Dominicans. Whatever we may think of their opinions, there can be no doubt that they were earnest "soldiers of the Cross of Christ," who having relinquished all that men hold most dear, riches, comforts, nay, even the bare necessities of life, spent their whole time in advancing God's work on earth, and in striving to raise their fellow-men from the sleep of sin. St. Dominic and St. Francis called on their followers to walk in their steps; and numbers, attracted by their holy lives and devotion to God's service, obeyed the summons and enrolled themselves under their banner.

England was in a very deplorable state during King John's unsettled reign. Matthew of Westminster thus describes what he saw going on daily around him. "The King became a perfect tyrant, having as his soldiers a detestable troop of foreigners, who, with their leader, began to lay waste the northern part of England; to destroy the castles of the barons, and burn without mercy all the towns and palaces which belonged to them; and to oppress the inhabitants of the country with tortures, in order to extort money from them. Everywhere there was grief and misery: the priest became as the people; and the sceptre of the Church was profaned; the bishops were proscribed, and the flock was scattered as the shepherds fled."* Many helpless and poor fled from the villages, where there was no protection for them, and took refuge in or near the large towns. Thus great masses of people were congregated together, while ignorance and sin abounded. *There were not many clergy to be found able or willing to cope*

* Matthew of Westminster, p. 122.

with this evil. Their number indeed was altogether insufficient for the work. The bishops and superior clergy were engrossed with their public duties; while the monks in the monasteries had their own appointed work. That work, however, was very differently performed to what it had been in past ages.

I think I have shown you clearly the infinite benefit these monastic institutions were to our country; I shall therefore be the more sorry to have to tell you, by-and-by, of the way in which they became corrupt, and in many cases worse than useless. When we read of the sad state of the people at this time, we can have no doubt but that "more labourers were required for the harvest." It pleased the Lord of the harvest to raise up a class of men who were in many respects well fitted for the work. Many will condemn, as wholly bad, the Mendicant Friars; but because a thing becomes, after a time, full of evil, I would not have you lose sight of the good there may have been in it originally. I shall have to tell you of the great evils that arose from this system of mendicant preachers; therefore I think it is only fair that I should speak of their usefulness. These men were called mendicants, or begging friars, because they professed to have no houses nor property of any kind. They travelled about preaching wherever they thought good might be done, living on what they could obtain by begging. They mixed freely among the poorer classes, sympathising with their poverty and privations, and preaching to them with familiarity and earnestness, in a style they could easily understand. By these means they soon won the hearts of the common people, who flocked in crowds to listen to their discourses. Many of the clergy of the monasteries had of late years become indifferent to the poor, and forgetting their high calling, and the flock that God had entrusted to their keeping, they lived a life of ease and self-indulgence. The poor and ignorant seldom reason as to whether a thing in principle be right or wrong. But when the friar came among them and enforced his preaching by living, as they did, a life of privation and self-denial, they hailed him as a true pastor, eagerly listened to his teaching, and forgot the allegiance they owed to their appointed bishops and clergy. Unhappily, in too many instances, the friars encouraged this feeling; they tried to alienate the hearts of the people from the parish priest, thereby causing a sad division in the Church, like many dissenters in our own day. The mendicants cared neither for bishop, abbot, nor priest, *preaching wherever they chose, without asking the consent of any one.* At first the different orders worked cordially together; but in after years they brought scandal on God's Church by

their jealousy and dissensions, while their opposition to the bishops and monks gradually increased. Besides the popularity of the Mendicant Friars at this time, one great cause of their success was the powerful support they received from the Pope, who gladly held out every encouragement to them. The reason soon became obvious. The friar proved, as Innocent had hoped, a most powerful instrument in his hands, and in the hands of his successors. There is no doubt that many good, earnest Christians were to be found among these friars; men who toiled incessantly for the good of others, and willingly relinquished all that they thought likely to hold them back from the service of their Master. No scene of sickness or death was too revolting, no heart too depraved for the Mendicant Friar. Fearless of danger, he might be found kneeling at the bedside of the fever-stricken or leprous, or standing alone in the midst of a throng of wild, lawless men, calling upon them with irresistible earnestness "to repent while the day of salvation lasted."

We may object to their system, and condemn their weaknesses; but we must honour with all due reverence their zeal and unselfishness.

As I go on with my history, I shall have occasion to speak of these Mendicant Orders again. I fear it will then be to show you how sadly they fell away from their original purity, and how much their system became corrupted.

CHAPTER XVII.

HENRY III.—1216 TO 1228.

RETIREMENT OF LANGTON—HENRY'S REIGN AN UNFORTUNATE ONE FOR THE COUNTRY—EXACTIONS OF THE POPE REACH THEIR HEIGHT—HE COMPELS HENRY TO DO HOMAGE—HENRY GIVES PROMISE OF GOVERNING WELL—ADMIRATION OF LANGTON FOR THE CHARACTER OF THOMAS A BECKET—GENERAL FEELING WITH REGARD TO BECKET—TRANSLATION OF HIS BONES—THE GORGEOUS SHRINE AND IMPOSING CEREMONY IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL—VENERATION IN WHICH BECKET WAS HELD—THE ARCHBISHOP AND BARONS MEET THE KING, AND ASSERT THEIR RIGHTS—LANGTON'S SPIRITED CONDUCT—WEAKNESS OF HENRY—THE POPE MAKES FRESH CLAIMS ON THE ENGLISH CHURCH—MEETING WITH OTHO THE LEGATE—HIS CRAFTY SPEECH—THE BARONS' REPLY—LANGTON CAUSES OTHO TO BE RECALLED—HENRY COMES OF AGE—HIS TYRANNICAL AND FALSE CONDUCT—DEATH OF STEPHEN LANGTON—HIS DEFECTS—THE LEARNED WORKS HE LEFT BEHIND HIM.

THAT Stephen Langton was performing an unselfish act, in *taking part in the public affairs of the kingdom*, is evident from *this fact*: directly his wise guidance was no longer needed, he

retired from the busy scene, in order to spend the remaining years of his life in study and meditation, for such pursuits were more congenial to his peaceful character. Henry III. was but a boy of ten when the crown was placed on his head. Happily for the kingdom, he was then too young to govern, so the management of affairs was placed in the hands of his guardian, William, Earl of Pembroke, who performed his duty wisely and well. But Pembroke soon died, and then everything was changed. On the whole, the long reign of Henry III. proved a disastrous one for our Church and country. During this period—chiefly owing to the weakness and folly of the King—the Pope's exactions reached their height. But the struggle was a long and an obstinate one. It will be my endeavour in these pages to give you a faithful and true account of it. I shall try and make what I have to say as little wearisome as possible, by dwelling on several interesting facts, and introducing one or two noble English characters, which seem to stand up like beacon lights in the darkness. The Pope determined not to lose the hold he had already gained on the liberties of the English Church. His legate Walo obliged the young King to do homage as vassal of the Roman Pontiff, and to pay yearly the large sum of one thousand marks* as an acknowledgment of his abasement. In the meantime, the barons took prompt steps to secure those free laws they had obtained with so much difficulty from King John. Henry promised fairly. He swore to grant to the English all those rights and liberties which King John had so reluctantly granted, and freely to pardon all who had joined the rebellion against his father. While the good Earl of Pembroke lived, Henry, by his advice, acted fairly towards his people, and gave promise of governing with wisdom and justice. But, unhappily, we shall see that after the death of his guardian, and when the reins of government were placed in his own hands, all his good resolutions fell to the ground; and, leaguering himself with the Pope, he trampled with impunity upon the rights of his subjects.

Before we take leave of Stephen Langton, in whose character I hope you have felt interested, I must just mention one or two important events in which he played a prominent part. You may remember I told you that he had a great admiration for the character of Archbishop Becket. Nor is this surprising when we consider the kind of man Langton was, and the feeling of the age. I have already shown you that in the grand struggle

* *The value of a mark being 13s. 4d., these 1000 marks, according to the then value of money (twenty times as much as at the present day), would amount to 13,333l. 6s. 8d.*

between the King and the people, during the early Norman period, the clergy of the Church were ranged on the national side, in opposition to the tyranny of the sovereign. The people looked to the Church for freedom and protection; and when their great champion Becket lived, struggled, and died for their cause, we can easily imagine that his memory would be held in extreme veneration. Before we deliver our judgment on this point, it would be well for us to ask ourselves, had we lived then, and been placed in the same position, should we have thought differently? In reading history, we have no right to judge of past events by our own light; we should try and shut our eyes to what has happened since; then live, as it were, at the time and form our opinion. But, to proceed, Langton shared the feeling of the age, when he determined to pay all reverence to the memory of the popular archbishop. Since the great fire in Canterbury Cathedral, Thomas à Becket's remains had been reverently preserved; but, up to this time, no fitting tomb had been raised to his memory. Langton determined to erect a shrine which should be worthy, by its magnificence, to contain the bones of the great man whose memory he, in common with the rest of Europe, so deeply venerated. On July 7th, 1220, a most gorgeous ceremony was performed in Canterbury Cathedral. The bones of the murdered primate were removed, or "translated," as it is called, into a handsome marble coffin. This coffin was placed in a shrine, the splendour of which must have astonished all who gazed on it. It was made of pure gold studded with the most precious jewels. Langton was determined that the event should make a due impression on the minds of the people. The day chosen was Tuesday, July 7th, the same day of the week, but just fifty years after the murder of Becket. All, from far and near, were invited to join in the ceremony. As the procession, headed by the young King, the Archbishop, and all the noble and great of the land, wound up the nave of the old cathedral to the scene of the murder, I have little doubt that there were some present on whom the impressive scene would come with double force—old men and women, who, as thoughtless children, had stood in the crowd outside the sacred building, fifty years before, on that dark December night, when the blood of the murdered primate was still flowing round the holy altar, and the wind and storm raged around.

For three centuries after the event I have been recording, the shrine of Becket became the resort of pious pilgrims from all countries. On the stones of the ancient Cathedral may still be seen the marks worn by the knees of thousands of devotees, who

came to present their offerings and say their prayers at the shrine of the popular saint, Thomas of Canterbury. But, unhappily, the gorgeous shrine itself, which would have been to us such a valuable relic of the past, has vanished.

Although Langton professed to have given up his public duties, so far as the State was concerned, we find him before his death, on two occasions, coming forward as champion for the liberty of his country. The Barons of England, determining to make the young king confirm their free laws, and swear to abide by Magna Charta, assembled themselves in London. Henry consented to meet them, that they might confer together. It was the season of Epiphany. The majestic bearing yet gentle countenance of the venerable Archbishop, as he stood forth, must have inspired the young King with a feeling of awe and respect. "We are here present," said Langton, turning to Henry, "to petition you, our liege lord, to confirm those liberties and free customs, for the sake of which war was waged against your father." Henry listened with attention as Langton proceeded. He was young, and would probably have treated with all reverence the request of one who was so universally respected. But, unhappily, his false favourite, William de Briwere, stood by his side, and to his evil counsel Henry lent a willing ear. Henry III. knew right from wrong; but, like many other weak-minded men, he listened to those who flattered him, and who tried to hide his failings. The King was silent. William de Briwere rose and spoke for him. His words and manner were insolent. "The liberties you are asking for," said he, "are not bound to be observed as of right, because they were extorted by violence." The Archbishop, though gentle by nature, was roused to indignation by the craft and injustice of this court favourite. The colour flushed into his face, and he exclaimed, with warmth, "William, if you really loved the king, you would not thus hinder the peace of the kingdom." The Archbishop's spirited conduct was not without its effect upon Henry. He turned towards Briwere, and said, with great dignity, "William, we have all sworn to those liberties, and we are all bound to observe what we have sworn to." Happy would it have been for England had Henry chosen to abide by these wise words. For a time he did so. He took measures to find out what laws existed in England in the time of his grandfather, Henry II., and appeared willing that these laws should be carried out and obeyed.* But Henry's good resolutions seldom lasted long. Yet he was not, like his father, a man of no religion. On several occasions he showed a devout reverence for the holy

* Matthew of Westminster, p. 142.

faith he professed to believe in. But his character was weak and vacillating; and, unable to look forward and judge of the effect of his unwise acts, he went blindly on, under the influence of any bad man who had the wit and cunning to take advantage of his weakness.

The Pope now began to bestir himself. In the year 1226 he sent his legate Otho into England. His demands were now more audacious than ever, and the whole country was in alarm. The legate held a council at Westminster, where, as Matthew of Westminster tells us, "the King, with his clergy and the nobles of his kingdom, were bound to appear to hear the commands of the lord Pope." The patriot Langton was present, and a large number of the laity, but the King was absent on account of sickness. ¶ The Pope's finances, from one cause and another, were at a low ebb; and he had commissioned his legate at all hazards to extort money from the English. Master Otho, as he was called, well knew the free spirit of the men with whom he had to deal, and he was aware that to threaten would but defeat his own object. He proceeded with all caution. His argument was a specious one. "The holy Roman Church," said he, "hath been for a long time under reproach. She hath been accused of covetousness, which is the root of all evil, because none can transact business at the Roman court except at the expense of vast sums of money and large gifts; and wherefore is it so? Truly because her poverty is great. So," continued Otho, craftily applying the argument to his hearers, "you who are her natural children ought to relieve the wants of your mother. Verily, unless we receive presents from you, and from other good and honourable men, we shall be in want of the very necessities of life, which would be a circumstance altogether unsuited to the Roman dignity." This pompous harangue failed to influence the council, as Otho had hoped; and when he proposed that a system should be set on foot, whereby the Pope might receive fixed annual revenue from the English Church, the bishops and abbots, much surprised at so unusual a request, retired to confer among themselves. Their answer was an evasive one. John, Archdeacon of Bedford, spoke for them. "My lord," said he, addressing himself to the legate, "the things you propose do especially affect the King of England, and indeed the patrons of churches throughout the kingdom, archbishops and their suffragans, and a countless number of the prelates of England. As therefore the King is absent through sickness, and as some of the prelates are not here, we have no power and no right to reply to you in their absence."* And so

* Matthew of Westminster, p. 149.

the meeting broke up; and the legate this time was defeated. Langton, as usual, behaved with boldness and decision. He determined to assert his own authority, and cause Otho to be removed. He accordingly sent a letter to the Pope, saying that Otho, being a foreigner, was no proper person to transact an affair of so much weight and difficulty; that he himself, being a native and Archbishop of Canterbury, was more likely to carry the point. The Pope, unwilling to offend so popular a man as Langton, recalled Otho, and handed over the matter to the primate.

In the year 1227 the King, having come of age, declared his intention of governing the kingdom in his own right. The falseness and obstinacy of this weak-minded prince now began to appear. It was a gloomy prospect for the Church and kingdom. Henry now boldly declared that the wise laws he had sworn to observe before he came of age were void. He pretended that at the time they were passed he had neither judgment to examine the contents, nor authority to sanction them.

Just at this juncture, when the clouds seemed gathering round the nation, Stephen Langton was called to his last account. No record has come down to us of the last hours of this great and good man. All that now remains to us of him are a few dry bones, which are placed in a stone coffin in the cathedral where he knelt and prayed. But Stephen Langton lives amongst us still in the free laws which he secured to our country so many hundred years ago.

Little remains to be said of the character of Langton. From all I have told you about him, I am sure you will respect him as a true-hearted Christian Englishman. But the best men have their defects, and I must not hide even those of Stephen Langton. Though an enlightened man, in one respect he was not in advance of the age in which he lived. He strenuously supported that unjust and cruel law by which all clergymen were compelled to lead single lives. And even in cases where they had wives, Langton commanded that they should be given up. Happily, the good he did more than counterbalanced the evil. Langton delighted in study, and wrote several valuable works. Among others, a commentary on the Old Testament, and on St. Paul's Epistles, and a life of Richard I. When you take the Bible in your hands, remember that it was Stephen Langton who first divided it into chapters as it now stands.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HENRY III. *continued.*—1228 to 1234.

REASONS WHY THE KING AND MONKS GENERALLY DIFFERED ABOUT THE CHOICE OF A PRIMATE—CONSECRATION OF RICHARD GRANT—HIS DEATH—HENRY'S UNPATRIOTIC AND WEAK CONDUCT—HE ENCOURAGES THE POPE IN HIS ENCROACHMENTS—POPE GREGORY IX. CLAIMS THE RIGHT OF NOMINATING TO ALL VACANT BENEFICES—HE FILLS THE ENGLISH LIVINGS WITH ITALIAN PRIESTS—INDIGNATION OF THE PEOPLE—SECRET ASSOCIATION FORMED BY THE NOBLES—THEIR VIOLENT CONDUCT—THEY EJECT THE ITALIANS—EXACTIONS OF GREGORY—INDIGNANT REFUSAL OF THE BARONS TO GRANT THE POPE MONEY—THE BISHOPS RELUCTANTLY CONSENT—SPIRITED CONDUCT OF RALPH, EARL OF CHESTER—WISDOM OF THE POPE IN HIS CHOICE OF A PRIMATE—STORY OF THE BOYHOOD OF EDMUND OF ABINGDON—PIETY OF HIS MOTHER, MABEL—EDMUND'S GENTLE CHARACTER AND EARLY LOVE FOR RELIGION—LESSON TO BE LEARNT FROM HIS EARNESTNESS AND REVERENCE—DEATH OF MABEL RICH—EDMUND'S POPULARITY—HE IS ELECTED ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—HIS HUMILITY AND UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE OFFICE—PUBLIC REJOICING AT HIS CONSECRATION.

WHEN a new primate was to be elected, the monks of Canterbury often acted (as we have already seen) in a very narrow-minded spirit. Their object was to appoint a man who would be likely to advance their own interests; while they shut their eyes to the fact that it was necessary that the Primate of England should be an able statesman as well as a theologian.* The King, on the other hand, was anxious to secure a man who would serve him well in the state. Consequently, when the See of Canterbury became vacant, the two parties could seldom agree in their choice of a new archbishop. The case was then referred to the Pope, who willingly acted as arbitrator, and soon claimed it as his right. In the case of Stephen Langton's successor, the Pope acted in concert with the King, and elected Richard Grant, a man of whom Henry approved, setting aside the choice of the monks. Richard's career, however, was a very brief one. He died in the year 1231, and the See of Canterbury was once more vacant. In the meantime, Henry, by his unpatriotic and weak conduct, encouraged Pope Gregory IX. in all his exactions. Step by step, little by little, the Papal See was encroaching on the liberties of the English Church. About this time, popular indignation was roused to a great height, and, we must own, there was every reason for it. Whenever a clergyman died, and his living became vacant, the Pope assumed the power of nominating his successor; and instead of *appointing some good English priest to do the work and preach*

* *Dr. Hook's Lives of the Archbishops*, vol. iii., p. 107.

to the people in their own tongue, he filled the English livings with Italian priests, who either never lived at their cures, or, if they did, had little or no sympathy with the flock over whom they were appointed shepherds. In the course of three years, it is said that no less than three hundred Italians were thus provided for; while numbers of honest English clergymen were shamefully deprived of their rights. Not content with holding one living, many of these foreign clergy had several. They then appointed curates, who were paid in a most wretched manner, while they themselves received large incomes, and impoverished the kingdom by spending their money abroad. Matthew Paris, a monk of St. Albans, who wrote a valuable history of this period, describes, with glowing indignation, the wretched condition of the country. "By his imperious extortions," he exclaims, "the Pope hath robbed the simple-minded, according to the saying of the poet, 'The man in power begs with a drawn sword!' Hence," continues Matthew Paris, "it hath come to pass, that where formerly noble and bountiful patrons of churches made themselves renowned throughout the surrounding country, by entertaining travellers, and refreshing the poor, now there were only debased men, agents of the Romans, who scrape together all that is valuable and useful, and transmit it to foreign countries, to their lords, living daintily on the patrimony of Christ, and bragging on the possessions of others." He concludes with the following characteristic outburst: "Now may indeed be seen heartfelt grief: the cheeks of the saints are wet with tears; sighs and complaints are heard around, while many exclaim, 'It were better to die than to behold the sufferings of our people, and our saints.' Woe to England, which, once the chief of provinces, mistress of nations, the mirror of the Church, and a pattern of religion, is now laid under tribute; ignoble men have trampled her under foot; she has fallen a prey to degenerate men! But the manifold offences of the English have brought this scourge upon themselves, through the anger of Him who for the sins of our people makes the hypocrite to reign, and the tyrant to bear rule." Thus does this monk of St. Albans describe the feeling of the nation; nor can any venture to say that he himself regards with any satisfaction the growing power of the Bishop of Rome. Unfortunately, Henry, instead of feeling as his people did, played into the Pope's hands. To make matters worse, he afterwards married a foreign princess, who cared nothing for her adopted country. Eleanor of Provence was a woman of strong will, and the weak mind of the King was easily influenced to favour her followers, who came over in large numbers, and, to the indig-

nation of the English, filled many of the best posts in the kingdom, and a number of livings. When we read of all this injustice and wrong, we are led to wonder at the forbearance of the people of England, and that they could patiently submit to the evil so long. The storm, however, which had been for some time gathering, burst at last. A kind of secret association was formed among the nobility and commons, to resist the unlawful oppression of the Roman See. We cannot but regret that the brave barons of England should have stooped to what was mean and underhanded in order to redress their grievances; for though we may have a righteous end in view, we sin if we employ unlawful means to gain it. But the English people were sorely tried at this time, and we may not judge them harshly.

The association sent letters to all the bishops and chapters, telling them that they could no longer endure the arbitrary oppression of the Romans, and warning them that if they encouraged their encroachments, their houses would be burnt and their farms destroyed. The monks were menaced in the same way. The threat was not needed, for in this instance the clergy cordially supported the barons, and a desperate onslaught was made on the Roman priests. On one occasion a Roman clergyman was forcibly carried off, kept five weeks in prison, and then compelled to pay a large sum for his ransom. The barns of the Italians were broken open, and their corn sold or given to the poor, while the priests themselves were thankful to retire to the monasteries for protection.*

It is a significant fact that these outrages remained unpunished. The magistrates and nobles shared the feeling of the people, and the King and the Pope were powerless. Pope Gregory had further roused the indignation of the English in another way. For some paltry reason he had engaged in a war, or crusade, as he was pleased to call it, against the Emperor Frederick of Germany. The war was an expensive one; his resources were now exhausted; and the weak King of England, whom he had flattered and cajoled, actually permitted him to apply to the English people for money. At a parliament summoned at Westminster the legate appeared, and with great effrontery demanded of the barons a tenth of all their property for the Pope. The King dared not speak. He knew well the feeling of the nation. The barons gave a positive refusal. Matthew Paris gives us the very words they used on this occasion. "The grasping importunity of these Romans," said they, "hath been such, that the property of the Church is well-

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 468.

nigh exhausted; our own wealth is swallowed up, and we can with difficulty draw breath for a time. These extortions we can no longer endure; pray, what advantage hath been conferred on the kingdom and on the Church by the superstitious domination of him who is only a partisan of the King, and who oppresses the Churches by various exactions, from which we now at least were hoping for some comfort and consolation? Let the King, who hath called this legate into the kingdom without the advice of his natural subjects, supply him." Unhappily, the bishops were irresolute, and at length gave a reluctant consent to this new extortion. The legate then proceeded to act. The Pope's collectors were distributed over the country, and those who opposed the tax were to be threatened with excommunication. "By such detestable counsel," indignantly exclaims Matthew of Westminster, "was the Church made to suffer incalculable injury in many ways." In several instances the clergy were forced to pawn even the sacred vessels of the Church in order to make up the money for this iniquitous rate. One man alone had the courage to resist the tyranny. Ralph, Earl of Chester, sternly refused to admit the Pope's collectors into his earldom, and protected the clergy and laity from their exactions.*

We are not told whether this brave Englishman fell under the Pope's anathema; but if it were so, let us hope that no priest could be found throughout his earldom cowardly enough to deny to his patriot lord those blessed means of grace which all free Englishmen had a right to claim. This is not a pleasant scene to dwell on, and I know you will be glad, for a little while, to turn to something different. I have said a great deal about the Pope and his exactions, and therefore am glad now to be able to say something in his favour. After the death of Richard Grant, it was some time before the different parties could decide who was to succeed him. The Pope, as was usual in such cases, decided the matter. His choice was a most wise one; and happily both King and monks were satisfied. They could indeed hardly object. Edmund of Abingdon, or Edmund Rich, as he is generally called, was a man who had gained the universal respect of all classes. In a religious age, Edmund of Abingdon stands forth from the rest of his countrymen a saint-like, almost faultless character. It will, I feel sure, be of advantage to you to dwell, for a time, on the life of this good man; and I know it will interest you if I give a short account of his boyhood. Edmund Rich was born at Abingdon, on the river Thames. His parents were blessed with a large family of children, but they were in comfortable circumstances, and much

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 465.

respected at the time of Edmund's birth. As we read of the early days of this future saint and Archbishop, we are forcibly reminded of the childhood of another great man, Anselm. Like his learned predecessor, Edmund of Abingdon was blessed with an excellent mother. Mabel Rich rejoiced at the birth of her boy; for in her own mind she felt convinced that one day he would be famous for his sanctity. She determined that nothing should be wanting on her part to secure this wished-for end. Example, we are told, is "stronger than precept;" and there is little doubt that the peculiar piety and self-devotion of his mother had a powerful effect upon the mind of the sensitive and affectionate Edmund. Mabel Rich was no ordinary woman. Her religion, though deep and earnest, took a form which we, in this age, could hardly imagine would prove attractive to a child. But Edmund's affection for his mother was deep and lasting; he willingly trod in her steps; and when he became a man he remembered with loving respect the parent who had taught him to admire and strive after all that was true and noble. In those days, extreme self-denial, and careful observance of outward acts of piety, were considered a very necessary part of true religion. Some would have us believe that the faith of our ancestors ended here; but we have only to read the lives of the many good and useful Christians who lived at this time, to see the falsity of such a notion. Fired with an enthusiastic zeal for her holy religion, Mabel considered no austerity too severe, no self-denial too strict, to prove her devotion for it. She fasted; she wounded her tender flesh with iron stays; she rose each night to pray in the neighbouring abbey church; and, not content to perform these acts of devotion herself, she compelled her household, in many respects, to conform to the same austere system. Her husband, Reinald, who appears to have shown a pardonable weakness for those domestic comforts which his wife withheld from him, retired in disgust to a monastery. Though we may admire the spirit that animated Mabel, we must own that she carried her religious exercises too far. The religion of Christ is not intended to interfere with our daily duties, but to exalt and ennoble them. While performing the commonest duties of every-day life we are serving God at the same time, if we are working in a right spirit; doing all, as St. Paul tells us, "heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men."*

Mabel was now left alone to train her favourite boy in her own way. He was all that she could desire. He cared nothing for childish toys. Ordinary boyish sports and amusements had no attraction for him. Every day the

* Col. iii. 23.

gentle child might be seen walking by his mother's side to the abbey church; and as she knelt on the cold, hard pavement, and offered up her prayers to God, the boy Edmund would steal close to her side, and clasping his little hands in prayer, would kneel in reverent devotion until the service was ended. Though in many respects we must find fault with Mabel's system, the result in Edmund's case was certainly a happy one. Edmund never forgot the lessons of faith and reverence he had learnt as a child from his pious mother; but while his ardent, loving nature delighted in prayer and praise, he carried out his religion in every act of his daily life. Let us gaze for a few minutes on the figure of that pale English boy kneeling at prayer in the old abbey of Abingdon. Possibly it may teach us now a useful lesson. In a self-indulgent age, like our own, many will treat with derision this humble Christian's devoted piety. But I would have you remember that it is far easier to laugh at than to imitate such self-devotion. Many a child now who enters the church, and goes into the sacred presence of Almighty God, thinks it a great hardship to be obliged to kneel in prayer before His footstool; or if he goes so far as to bend his knees for a brief space he cannot do so without a high, well-padded hassock. Without a thought he would withhold from the King of Kings and Lord of Lords that obeisance he would consider it his duty to pay to his earthly sovereign. How different was that reverent piety of old which shone forth so conspicuously in the character of Edmund Rich! He was a man of prayer. His outward reverence sprang from a self-abased and loving heart; and, falling low on his knees before God's footstool, he confessed with deep sorrow his many and grievous offences.

The man who thinks it a needless burthen to worship in God's house once a week, and who, when there, sits in his Maker's presence with wandering thought and irreverent attitude, has no right to ridicule this Christian man, who dedicated both mind and body to his Master's service. The age in which Edmund lived without doubt placed its religion too much in outward observances; yet at the same time we ought to admire the earnest spirit with which it acted. I would have you bear in mind that while outward devotion *may* exist without inward piety of heart, yet that there can be no true piety where the outward observances of religion are disregarded.

While Edmund was training for Holy Orders at Oxford, Mabel died. He mourned long and deeply for his good mother. Although she did not live to see her favourite son elevated to the high position he afterwards held, she had the happiness

of knowing he was everywhere beloved and respected for his unselfish kindness and consistent piety. Edmund was justly famous as a preacher; his sermons were full of plain, earnest truth; his manner persuasive, and his words eloquent; while the holy life he led added double force to all he said.

I will now pass on to Edmund's public life. I have already told you that the Pope, the King, and the monks all agreed that he was well worthy to fill the vacant archbishopric; and when his election was known the people showed their approval by loud and prolonged shouts of applause. But, like Anselm, Edmund Rich reluctantly accepted the honour. Doubtful as to what course to pursue, he passed many hours in silent prayer, that God would guide him aright; and when he came forth from his chamber his eyes were wet with tears. The devotion of his countrymen had touched his gentle heart. With true humility, he told them they had formed too high an estimate of his character, and entreated them to select a man more worthy of the dignity. But no such man was to be found, and Edmund's scruples were unavailing. He at length reluctantly consented—only, as he declared, from a sense of duty. The country at this time was in a sad state of disorder. Great difficulties lay before him, but Edmund was a man of prayer, and, in answer to his earnest petitions, God gave him the strength and wisdom he so much needed.

CHAPTER XIX.

HENRY III. *continued.*—1234 to 1238.

CONSECRATION OF EDMUND RICH—HIS FIRST ACT—GRASPING CONDUCT OF THE KING—WILLINGNESS OF THE BARONS TO GRANT HIM MONEY—HENRY SECRETLY RECALLS OTHO, THE LEGATE—INDIGNATION OF THE PEOPLE—REMONSTRANCE OF THE ARCHBISHOP—HIGH CHARACTER OF OTHO—DEVOTION OF THE KING TO THE LEGATE—BEHAVIOUR OF THE KING OF SCOTS—HIS SPIRITED ADDRESS TO OTHO—THE POPE OF ROME ACKNOWLEDGED SUPREME HEAD OF THE CHURCH—THE MENDICANT FRIARS GREATLY ADVANCE THE CLAIMS OF THE POPE—THEIR INCREASED INFLUENCE AND POWER—THEIR SYSTEM BECOMES CORRUPTED—REMONSTRANCE OF THE POPE—STRONG RELIGIOUS FEELING IN THE NATION—BISHOP GROSTËTE—HIS FAITH AND PIETY—HIS BOLD AND PATRIOTIC CONDUCT—HE EXPOSES THE PRACTICES OF THE FRIARS—RICHARD POER, BISHOP OF SARUM, OR SALISBURY—HE INDUCES THE PEOPLE OF OLD SARUM TO REMOVE THEIR CITY AND CATHEDRAL—THEIR ACTIVE ENERGY IN BUILDING THE NEW CATHEDRAL AT SALISBURY.

EDMUND RICH was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury in the year 1234. His first act was a truly Christian one. The King, by his selfish and unpatriotic conduct, had already estranged the hearts of his people. As Matthew of Westminster quaintly

says : "He who it had been hoped would have turned out a shepherd and a father became an ally of the wolves against his own natural flock." The barons were ready to rise in open revolt ; but Edmund was a peacemaker, and determined to reconcile the King with his nobles. He succeeded in influencing Henry to pardon the offenders ; and for a time peace was restored. The writer I have just quoted tells us that Henry with all his faults was capable of admiring and respecting the character of this good man. He thus speaks of the Archbishop : "Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, a man of marvellous sanctity and mildness, eagerly desiring the peace and honour of the King and kingdom, exerted himself as much as possible, going to and fro between the two parties repeatedly, in order to establish peace between the King and his natural subjects ; and the King, knowing that he was a holy and a just man, inclined his mind to his prayers."* It would have been well for Henry, and for his kingdom, had he listened to the wise advice of the Archbishop ; but, like most weak men, he was very obstinate, and always listened to evil counsellors who flattered and humoured him. I have already told you how little regard Henry paid to the laws of his country ; and although the nobles and people gladly supplied him with money, he spent it in such a reckless manner that he was always complaining of poverty and asking for fresh supplies.

In the year 1237, Henry called a meeting of the archbishops, bishops, and nobles in London, in order to draw from them more money. When his request was made known, we are told that "murmurs, mingled with groans and grief, sounded through the hall." The nobles complained, "that money had often been extorted from them, as if they had been slaves of the lowest class, while the commonwealth was injured, and they received no advantage whatever." As usual, the weak-minded king humbled himself before his subjects, hoping thereby to gain his point. He solemnly promised that if they would grant him what he asked, "he would from that time forth observe inviolably the liberties granted by Magna Charta to his faithful subjects ; and never more provoke the nobles of England, by doing them injury, or eating away their property by exactions." "By this conduct," says Matthew of Westminster, "did he pacify the hearts of his hearers." The loyalty and good nature of the barons are conspicuous on this occasion ; they came forward willingly, and offered once more to replenish the king's exhausted exchequer. But the people soon had cause to complain again of their fickle sovereign. You remember how Stephen

* Matthew of Westminster, vol. ii., p. 174.

Langton had contrived to get rid of Otho, the Pope's legate. Henry, having lost the confidence of his subjects, now turned to the Pope for help. He determined on recalling the legate. It would have been far wiser and better had he trusted to the support of his loyal subjects, who had so lately given proof of their attachment to the Crown. But Henry preferred his own course; and, we must own, acted in a manner quite unworthy of a Christian man and a king. Fearing the wrath of his people, he sent for the legate secretly; but as soon as the plan was discovered public indignation was roused, and loud were the complaints on all sides. "The King," said they, "perverts all laws, breaks his faith and promises, and transgresses in everything he does; he a little while ago united himself in marriage to a foreigner, without consulting his friends and natural subjects; and now he has secretly summoned a legate to make alteration throughout the whole kingdom."* Nor was the Archbishop silent. Like Stephen Langton, he acted throughout this difficult time with true patriotism; and though he owed his promotion to Gregory, he loved his own country too well to see it trampled upon by foreigners without a remonstrance. He boldly reprov'd the King for his folly. "My lord," he said, "this act of yours will ere long be the cause of great loss to the kingdom, and will surely prejudice your own dignity." "But the King," says Matthew Paris, "rejected his advice, and would on no account abandon the purpose he had conceived in his mind."†

Though we may object to the policy of both king and pope, we must, however, do justice to the legate. Otho was a man of prudence and moderation; he did all he could to pacify the people, and by his wise acts, for the most part, showed a real interest in his adopted country. Matthew Paris, who cannot be accused of favouring the Roman cause, owns that Otho behaved with wisdom and humility in many instances, refusing the valuable presents offered him. The friars hailed his coming with great satisfaction. Indeed, Otho contrived to ingratiate himself with a good many of the English people, although the feeling of the country with regard to the Pope remained the same. In the meantime, Henry did all he could to show his devotion for the legate. His behaviour is thus described by Matthew Paris: "The King rejected the advice of his natural subjects, and grew worse and worse in the madness he had conceived; he resigned himself entirely to the will of the Romans, and especially of the legate, whose very footsteps he appeared to worship. He also declared that he would arrange no busi-

* Matthew Paris, vol. i., p. 54.

† Ibid., p. 55.

ness, either public or private, without the consent of his lord the Pope, or his legate ; so that he might be said to be not a king, but a vassal of the Pope.”*

Henry's conduct was certainly very different to that of his neighbour the King of Scots. Otho, thinking it would be well to inquire into the state of the Scottish Church, approached the border with a numerous train of followers. But he was destined to meet with a signal rebuff. The King of Scots had an interview with the legate, and made a speech, which we could well imagine a blunt Scotchman making now. The mixture of defiance and courtesy is sufficiently amusing. He comes at once to the point. “I do not remember,” says he, “to have seen a legate in my territories, nor that it has been necessary for one to be summoned there, thanks to God ! nor is there now any need of one, for all goes on well. No legate was allowed entrance into this kingdom during the time of my father, or any of my ancestors, and I will not allow it as long as I am able. However,” continued he, “as report pronounces you to be a man of sanctity, I warn you, if you should happen to enter my territories, to proceed cautiously, lest anything untoward happen to you. For ungovernable wild men dwell here, who thirst after human blood, and whom I myself cannot tame. If they were to attack you, I should be unable to restrain them.” Otho, not willing to suffer martyrdom in the Pope's cause, took the hint, and wisely retired.

But the King of Scots, although intending to assert his own rights with firmness, could respect goodness in any man. In order to show that he felt no ill-will towards Otho himself, he kindly allowed an Italian, who was related to the legate, to remain with him, and shortly afterwards honoured him with knighthood, and bestowed on him some land. The conduct of this Christian king is an example to us. As soldiers of Christ, we are bound to set our faces against what is wrong and contrary to the faith of Scripture and the Church ; but true Christian charity, while it condemns false and infidel opinions, will show gentleness to the man who holds them, distinguishing the offence from the offender. We have St. Paul's authority for thus acting. In his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, he says : “If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”†

Although, as I have said, the greater part of the clergy and people struggled manfully to resist the tyranny of the Pope, the

* Matthew Paris, vol. i., p. 68.

† 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

idea that the Bishop of Rome was supreme head of the Church was gradually gaining ground. As you may suppose, the more this notion became rooted in the minds of the people, the more necessary they considered it to believe all that the Roman Church held. The voice of the Pope was not merely the voice of man, but the voice of God. The wonderful influence possessed by the Mendicant Friars (those zealous servants of the Church of Rome) over the minds of the poorer classes, in a great measure, brought about this result. Every year their hold upon the people was becoming stronger and firmer; their self-denial, piety, and earnest preaching impressed men's minds with the sincerity of their faith. Their popularity is proved beyond doubt by this fact: at a time when the feeling of the nation was so strong against the Pope, the friars took root in the land, and became an important and flourishing body. Unhappily, a great deal that these men taught was contrary to Scripture and the faith of the early Church. I shall not, however, enter now upon those particulars in which we believe the Church of Rome to be in error; that I must reserve for a future chapter. I would only say a few words about the mendicant system, and its abuses. When a man joined the order of Mendicant Friars, one of the vows he was compelled to take was that of poverty; that is, all the wealth he possessed was to be given up. Now, although we cannot but admire the self-denying spirit of these men, we must own that the principle upon which they acted was a wrong one. God gives us certain gifts, or "talents" (as they are called in the Bible), which He expects us to employ in His service, and at the last day will require of us an account of the use made of them. We have no right to suppose that the mere possession of riches is sinful. Worldly goods are talents which God has bestowed, not to be cast away as worthless, but to be employed in the service of our fellow-creatures. The rich man in our Lord's parable was not condemned because he was rich, but because he spent all his wealth on himself, without regard to the wants of others. It was the laudable desire to avoid that love of riches which is so hateful in God's sight, that made the Mendicant Friars fall into the opposite extreme. Fearing lest they might abuse the wealth God had bestowed, they freed themselves from all responsibility by resigning it; thus showing their contempt for the gifts which God would have had them use in His service. But then they nobly toiled hard, night and day, preaching to and teaching the people, undergoing every kind of privation willingly, begging their daily food from door to door. Their success was wonderful. Within thirty-two years of their landing in England, ninety-

nine convents of Mendicant Friars had been established, while their numbers had increased to nearly five thousand.* But prosperity is often the ruin of a system; and so it proved with the friars. Their poverty was soon abandoned; and as their popularity increased, their wealth became enormous, while the strict rules they observed at first with regard to food and clothing were often broken. Loud were the complaints raised against the friars in after years. It was commonly said that "no one, high or low, could sit down to meat, but he must ask a friar or two; who, when they came, would play the host themselves, and carry away meat and bread besides." It is but justice to the Pope to say that he did all he could to stop the abuse. Matthew Paris, who hated the friars, and bitterly complained of their insolence, gives us the Pope's indignant rebuke. "What means this, my brethren?" he says; "to what lengths are you going? Have you not professed voluntary poverty, and that you would traverse towns and castles and distant places, as the case required, barefooted and unostentatiously, in order to preach the word of God in all humility? But now you presume to usurp these estates to yourselves, against the will of the lords of these fees. Your religion appears to be in a great measure dying out, and your doctrines to be confuted."†

There are many who ignorantly imagine that at this period, and up to the time of the Reformation, all the people of England, and especially the clergy of the Church, quietly submitted to the dominion of the Pope, and accepted all that the Church of Rome upheld as necessary to salvation. I think I have already shown you the folly of the first notion that the Pope was acknowledged as supreme head of the Church both in spiritual and temporal matters by all. Plain historical facts speak for themselves. They are unanswerable. I will now try and expose the last error—that all that Rome taught was accepted. Those who say this forget that there always have been and always will be good men in England who stand up for the truth, and expose what is really contrary to the faith of Christ. It is so in our days, and it was so in past times. The light of God's truth has never been wholly extinguished, at least in our land. We have only to look at the facts, to be reminded that genuine religious feeling at this time was still strong in the hearts of the English people. The worship of God was upheld and encouraged; noble churches sprang up throughout the length and breadth of the land, witnessing to the liberality and active piety of our ancestors. The divine nature of our blessed Lord,

* Massingberd's English Reformation, p. 105.

† Matthew Paris, vol. ii., p. 6.

and His atonement for us upon the cross, were diligently preached. The Scriptures were not only preserved, but carefully studied by many of the clergy; and the necessity of obedience to Christ was not forgotten. Our Lord has told us that there must ever be tares among the wheat—a saying which may be applied to everything in the world—and we know that there was much error mixed up with all this good. But have we not a great deal that is evil to deplore in our own time, although our shortcomings now may take a different form? The deeds of those earnest-minded Christian prelates of whom you have read, prove to us beyond a doubt that the true faith still burnt brightly in the hearts of many. I will now tell you about one or two enlightened men who lived at this time.

Grostête, Bishop of Lincoln, was a man who possessed a wide influence. He was greatly respected for his piety and consistent conduct. The works of this Bishop contain abundant evidence of his love for Christ, while they show the reverence with which he regarded the Holy Scriptures. It will, I think, interest you if I give you a short extract from one of his sermons. The text is from the well-known passage in St. John's Gospel, "I am the Good Shepherd." "The good shepherd," says Grostête, applying the words to the faithful priest, "enters in at the right door, namely by Christ preached. He maketh the sheep hear his voice; he calleth his own sheep by name, for he seeks to know those who are written in the Book of Life; and he not only knows them, but is known of them, by his works, his goodness, his labour of love; as Christ says, I know my sheep, and am known of mine; he leadeth them out of sin, link by link as their sins connect them, so must the steps of true repentance set them free. He goeth before them, according to the injunction of St. Paul, 'Be an example to the flock in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity.'" Such words as these were not likely to fall dead on the hearts of those who heard them; for all respected and loved their good pastor, who, in his daily life, acted up to what he taught, going in and out among his flock, as a faithful shepherd should do. Like Langton and Edmund Rich, Grostête was a patriot, and made himself doubly popular by his strenuous opposition to the encroachments of the Pope. The simplicity of his religious faith made him reject, as contrary to true religion, many of the new opinions which the Church of Rome taught. At a large meeting of the Bishops and clergy held at Lyons, in France, at which Pope Gregory was present, Grostête boldly exposed the evil practices of many of the Roman clergy, who, I told you, had settled in such numbers in England. His language is strong; but we must

bear in mind that it was the custom in those days to speak plainly. "Pastors," exclaimed Grostête, "who do not preach Christ, even if they have no other sin, are antichrist and Satan transformed into an angel of light."

Not long afterwards this bold patriot was suspended by the Pope for refusing to induct an Italian, a mere boy, into a rich living belonging to his diocese. "To give the care of souls to a child," exclaimed Grostête, "is contrary to Scripture, which forbids those persons to be made shepherds who are not able to keep off the wolves." The good Bishop's truthful nature compelled him to rebuke the inconsistent conduct of the Mendicant Friars, who, as we have seen, failed in their duty, and set their own laws at defiance. "These orders," said he, "were established in voluntary poverty, that they might have spirit more freely to reprove the sins of the nobles boldly. But they have failed to reprove sin, and therefore they are heretics, for they believe only what their own human sense would teach them, and which is contrary to Holy Scripture; while they openly teach the same and zealously defend it."*

Grostête was an honest man, and, as you see, boldly exposed the evils he saw going on in the Church; "For," said he, "every faithful believer is bound to expose what is heretical or false as much as he can, for he who does not oppose error sins and appears to be a favourer of it."† I shall have more to tell you about this good Bishop in a future chapter; but before I close this one, I must not forget to mention another worthy Bishop who lived about this time. It is to Richard Poer's energy that we owe our beautiful cathedral at Salisbury. It was built under very peculiar circumstances. When Richard Poer first became Bishop of Salisbury, or Sarum, as it was called, he found the cathedral and town situated on a singularly bleak and barren spot. Nothing there seemed to grow or prosper. There were no hills nor trees to protect the town, and the sharp north wind whistled through the streets with a hollow dismal sound; and, though all complained, no one could be found energetic enough to act in the matter, until Richard Poer came among them. He at once called a meeting of the clergy and townsmen, and boldly proposed to them to remove the town and cathedral to a more genial spot, about a mile off. It speaks well for the industry of our ancestors that this extraordinary plan was carried out. But the most praiseworthy part of the undertaking was the building of the new and beautiful cathedral. All classes willingly gave their time and money for the good work, for they respected their Bishop, and gladly supported him in all that he

* Matthew of Westminster, vol. ii., p. 330.

† Ibid.

undertook. Salisbury Cathedral is one of the finest specimens we have of early English architecture, and is a most interesting memorial of the zeal of good Bishop Poer.

About a mile from Salisbury may still be seen the spot where stood the ancient city of Old Sarum—"a hollow dry place enough," as Matthew Paris says. All vestiges of the buildings have disappeared; but a large mound shows where the cathedral and the principal part of the town was built. If ever you go there, you will remember this strange story, and wonder at the enterprising spirit of the Bishop of Sarum and his people. The Bishop of Salisbury always now styles himself Bishop of Sarum, so that the quaint history of the city is still kept alive in this title.

CHAPTER XX.

HENRY III. *continued.*—1238 to 1240.

COUNCIL HELD BY OTHO IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL—WISE LAWS PASSED—FOOLISH CONDUCT OF HENRY—SERIOUS DISTURBANCE WITH THE LEGATE NEAR OXFORD—HUMILIATION AND SUBMISSION OF THE CLERGY—THE TYRANNY AND EXACTIONS OF THE POPE INCREASE—INTERVIEW OF THE ABBOTS WITH HENRY—THE KING'S HEARTLESS CONDUCT—RETIREMENT OF ARCHBISHOP EDMUND TO FRANCE—HIS GRIEF AT THE STATE OF HIS COUNTRY—HIS INCREASED AUSTERITIES—HIS FINAL ILLNESS AND DEATH—HIS LAST WORDS—HIS CHARACTER REVIEWED.

THE King and Otho now determined on calling a general Council of the prelates of England. But the legate, knowing how much the English people hated the interference of the Pope, and fearing lest the mob might proceed to violence, begged Henry to grant him a guard of soldiers, who were secretly hidden somewhere in the neighbourhood. It was a grand occasion. Otho, gorgeously attired, entered the Cathedral of St. Paul. He had difficulty in doing so, for the crowd of Bishops outside was very great. It must have been a most imposing ceremony. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York preceded the legate, bearing the cross and lighted candles; and while they chanted the Litany Otho ascended the steps to the throne prepared for him, which was gorgeously decorated with tapestry and coloured awnings. The beautiful hymn, "Come, Holy Ghost, Creator come," which we use in our churches now on great and solemn occasions, was then sung; and after the legate had preached the Council proceeded to discuss the affairs of the Church.* Some wise and useful laws were passed. Among

* Matthew Paris, vol. i., p. 72.

other things it was decreed that the Sacraments should be devoutly and reverently administered, the priest accepting no money. The form of Baptism was to be publicly explained to the parishioners on Sunday, that they might not bring their children to the font understanding nothing of the nature of this Holy Sacrament. Bishops were enjoined to inquire diligently into the characters of their clergy. The law states "that they are to see that there shall always be some one residing at the church who shall be anxious in his attention to the cure of souls, and shall employ himself usefully and honourably in the performance of Divine service, and in the administering of the Sacraments." The prelates were further exhorted to watch over their flocks, setting them an example of purity and diligence; "travelling through their dioceses at seasonable times, reforming and correcting abuses, consecrating churches, and sowing the word of life in the field of the Lord."* These laws breathe the spirit of true religion and sound common sense. Although Otho appears to have tried to make peace between the King and his subjects, Henry became daily more and more unpopular. After having sworn he would no longer rouse the anger of his people by forcing foreign clergy upon them, he made every effort to get a certain William (who was to have held some foreign bishopric) elected Bishop of Winchester. He was a man of bad character; and the monks of the cathedral vigorously opposed the King's wishes. Henry had the meanness to vent his anger on the monks, by destroying their possessions and otherwise harassing them. Happily, the death of the elect Bishop put a stop to the quarrel; but the weak and childish King could not conceal his grief and annoyance. When the news of William's death reached him, "He could no longer restrain himself, but tore his clothes, threw them into the fire, and giving vent to loud lamentations, refused to accept consolation from any one."† Although we may believe that Otho had no share in this folly, the people appear to have regarded him as the cause of all their misfortunes.

About this time a serious disturbance took place near Oxford. I think the quaint story will entertain you, so I will relate it. Otho, the legate, had at this time taken up his abode at the Abbey of Osney, near Oxford. The clergy of Oxford, hearing of the arrival of so great a person in their neighbourhood, went in a body to pay their respects to the legate. But their courteous intention was rudely put a stop to. They were met at the gate by a surly porter, who roughly demanded their business. Aware that Otho liked the good things of this life, the clergy

* *Matthew Paris*, vol. i., pp. 82, 87.

† *Ibid.*, p. 241.

had come provided with a tempting present of eatables. "We are here," said they, "to pay our respects to my lord the legate," confidently believing, as Matthew Paris says, "that they would receive honour for honour." But the doorkeeper, who was an Italian, appears to have been blessed with a large amount of the irritability of his nation, and with taunting speeches and haughty abuse slammed the door in the faces of the Englishmen. Such an insult was not to be borne. The priests' blood was up. They rushed forward with impetuosity, while the Romans attempted to beat them back with their fists and sticks. While this unseemly fray was going forward, an unlucky Irish priest, who was standing at the door of the kitchen, humbly besought that something might be given him to eat. The head cook, who, like most of his class, was apt at times to lose his temper, had joined in the scuffle, and was therefore by no means disposed to listen patiently to the humble request of the poor priest. With brutal haste, he seized a large iron spoon, plunged it into the cauldron of boiling water, and flung the contents into the face of the wretched man. A loud shout of rage and indignation rose from the Englishmen. "Shame on us," they exclaimed, "if we endure such insults as this!" No sooner were these words uttered, than one of the priests discharged an arrow at the offending cook. It pierced his heart, and he fell dead. To the astonishment of all, the murdered man was no less a person than the legate's brother. He had been placed by Otho at the head of his kitchen, in order to prevent the possibility of poison being given to him in his food. As the dead man fell to the ground, a loud cry was raised. The legate heard it, and in terror of his life fled in haste to the tower of the Church, securing the doors behind him. When the darkness of the night had put an end to the tumult, he issued from his retreat, and throwing off his canonical robes, mounted his fleetest steed, and fled in haste to the King, to inform him of the outrage, and seek redress. As the horse galloped through the darkness, loud shouts of vengeance fell on the ears of the affrighted legate. "Where is the plunderer of revenues, the thirster for money, who perverts the King, subverts the kingdom, and enriches foreigners with spoil taken from us?" But Otho "having crossed the river with much trouble, and few attendants, the rest remaining concealed in the convent, came into the King's presence, all breathless, and in a state of alarm. With tears and sighs he explained to Henry the series of events which had happened, making a serious complaint in the matter."* The King was all sympathy. He regarded an insult offered to his

* Matthew Paris, vol. i., p. 128.

favourite as an insult offered to himself, and resolved to punish the offenders with all severity. He immediately sent an armed troop of soldiers to Oxford, to protect the Romans and seize the scholars. Many of the clergy were imprisoned; the rest were forced to submit to the most humiliating conditions, in order to obtain the forgiveness of Otho. Bareheaded and barefooted, they walked the distance of a mile to the legate's abode, and having humbly knelt and asked his pardon, were allowed to depart in peace.

Pope Gregory, encouraged by Henry, now determined to extort more money from the English clergy. For this purpose he sent over a man named Peter, who well understood the business, and by threats and promises endeavoured to draw money from the abbots of the different monasteries. The unlucky abbots, finding themselves hard pressed, went with dejected countenances to the King. "Your Majesty," said they, "we are beaten, and not allowed to exclaim against it; our throats are cut, and we cannot cry out; impossibilities are enjoined on us by the Pope, and a detestable extortion is practised on the whole world. We therefore run to the asylum of your councils, and to your protecting bosom, and demand your advice and assistance in this state of desolation." But in the dastard heart of Henry little love for his people and country remained; he regarded the unlucky abbots with a scowling look, and to their great alarm called out with a loud voice to the legate, who stood by: "See, these wretched men are disclosing the secrets of the Pope, and giving vent to reproaches; do what you will with them; I grant you one of my best castles to imprison them in." "The abbots," says Matthew Paris, "when they heard these words, were struck with dismay, and departed, promising to satisfy the legate's demands." A few, however, refused to bow their necks to the slavery, and stood firm in their refusal to pay the money. Meanwhile the saintly Archbishop Edmund, who loved his country and people with true affection, was deeply grieved to find how much suffering was caused by the tyranny of the Pope, and by the foolish weakness of the King. He hated injustice; but though he was a brave man, and cared not what he suffered in defence of the right, he could not do battle for his country as Stephen Langton did. His nature was gentle and sensitive; and finding it impossible to check the evil, he lost heart altogether, and began to yearn for rest, and for the quiet enjoyment of prayer and meditation. Edmund had already found it useless to attempt to influence Henry. On several occasions he had mortally offended the King by boldly remonstrating with him on his conduct, and he

now gave up the attempt in despair. Edmund would have acted with more wisdom, had he stood to his post, and not given way to this despondency. It is true, a heart full of love for Christ longs for undisturbed communion with Him; but the truest way of showing our love to God is to do the work He gives us, even if we dislike it. We cannot hope for rest in this world; but we may hope for and pray for true peace of mind. This inward peace the pious heart of Edmund had found; but he longed for rest also. Having gained Henry's reluctant consent, he bade farewell to his native land, and retired to the monastery of Pontigny, in France. It was a hallowed spot to Edmund, for Thomas à Becket, the martyred Archbishop, had dwelt there during his banishment. Here the self-exiled primate gave himself up entirely to those religious duties he had observed so faithfully from childhood; and though constant self-denial had greatly weakened his delicate frame, he refused to relax any of his severities. He would go for hours without tasting food; for hours he would kneel in silent prayer on the cold stones, until his knees became hard and bony; and when, overpowered with weariness, he retired to his cell, it was not to lie on a soft bed, but to sit up on a hard chair, or crouch on the cold ground.

Such severe and unusual self-denial hastened his end. As the last hour approached, his thoughts turned towards his native country. His gentle heart was grieved at the sad state to which it was reduced. "Oh how much better would it be to die," he exclaimed, "than to see the sufferings of one's people and of the saints upon earth!" His heart had long yearned for his old home, and many were the prayers he offered up for his church and people. Death had no terrors for Edmund Rich, for, as Matthew of Westminster piously and truly says: "This holy man happily exchanged exile in this life for the heavenly country." His dying words prove that, in truth, he regarded this world only as a place of banishment from God. "Woe is me, that my exile has been prolonged; it is already sufficient that I have seen all things involved in destruction; take my life, O Lord my God." After having received the holy communion, he expired, uttering the following words, which breathe a spirit of deep religious earnestness, and well express the object for which he had lived: "Thou, O Lord, art He in whom I have believed; whom I have preached; whom I have taught; and Thou art my witness that I have sought nothing on earth, O Lord, except Thee. Thou knowest, O Father, that I will nothing but what Thou willest; therefore, Thy will be done." Edmund, by his piety and gentleness, had gained the love and

respect of the people among whom he dwelt during his exile; and both in France and England numbers mourned for the holy and brave man whose Christian example and earnest preaching had drawn many to Christ. A Pope who lived some years afterwards, and who venerated the memory of the saintly Archbishop, describes his character in a long and enthusiastic harangue. A great deal of it is certainly exaggerated and absurd; but the short passage I have selected bears upon the face of it the stamp of truth. You will own that it quite agrees with all I have told you of this great man. "From his tender years, Edmund tenderly loved the Son of God, and did never cease to retain Him in his heart afterwards; for the more he advanced in years and knowledge, the more did he grow with love towards Him. From the beginning of his life he laboured to proceed on purely to the end, avoiding the slippery world, and not falling into the slime of pleasure: he was pre-eminent for the lustre of his purity. He bruised the frail vessel of his flesh that he might the more carefully preserve the treasure of his soul which was laid up in it. Finally," says the narrator, "he knew Jesus with such an unshaken faith, he acknowledged Him with so sincere a heart, and loving Him, he so approached Him with every wish, that, utterly disregarding the world, and all that is therein, he directed his wishes to heavenly objects."*

Many in our own age will condemn Edmund Rich as a half-mad and superstitious enthusiast. I do not deny that he had his faults; but I maintain that his sanctity, his boldness, his deep love for his Saviour, his lofty indifference to the pleasures and luxuries of this world, put to shame many a self-indulgent Christian now, and speak to us in living words of all that is noble and true in the Christian character.

* Matthew Paris, vol. i., p. 270.

CHAPTER XXI.

HENRY III. *continued.*—1240 to 1250.

BONIFACE OF SAVOY IS CHOSEN BY HENRY ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—HIS CHARACTER—DISAPPROVAL OF THE PEOPLE—HENRY'S ARBITRARY CONDUCT WITH REGARD TO THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER—THE BISHOPS OF LINCOLN, HEREFORD, AND WORCESTER TRY TO BRING THE KING TO A RIGHT MIND—THEIR ILL SUCCESS—RITUAL OF THE BISHOP OF FRANCE—INDIGNATION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE—HENRY RELENTS, AND RELUCTANTLY PERMITS THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER TO RETURN TO HIS DIOCESE—PRIDE AND INSOLENCE OF MASTER MARTIN—HIS COWARDICE—HE RETREATS FROM ENGLAND—LOUD MURMURS ON ACCOUNT OF THE PAPAL TYRANNY—HENRY JOINS WITH THE PEOPLE IN SENDING LETTERS OF REMONSTRANCE TO ROME—THE POPE TREATS THE LETTERS WITH CONTEMPT—HENRY'S WEAK AND VACILLATING CONDUCT—RULES OBSERVED IN THE CHURCH AT THIS TIME—MANNER OF PERFORMING DIVINE SERVICE.

It was a relief to Henry when Archbishop Edmund died. He had ever counselled his sovereign wisely ; but at the same time he had boldly and firmly censured his tyrannical and false conduct, and it was this that had chafed and annoyed the King. He now determined to bring forward a man whose sympathies would not all be with the people. He therefore chose Boniface of Savoy—a foreigner, and uncle to the Queen. But Henry committed a most unpopular act in selecting such a man to fill the vacant primacy. Boniface was certainly of noble birth, handsome person, and a brave man. But he was passionate and tyrannical, and lacked the learning and piety of his predecessor, Edmund. He cared but little for his adopted country. His heart was in his native land, and all his sympathies were with his own people. It was a natural feeling, and we may not blame it. But little excuse can be made for Henry, who could sanction and even compel the election of a man so obnoxious to his subjects as Boniface. Henry sent a glowing letter, in praise of his uncle, to the Pope, and so managed to gain him over. The monks of Canterbury, finding the Pope had given in, and alarmed by the King's threats, reluctantly consented to acknowledge the foreign Boniface as their Archbishop ; "thus," says Matthew Paris, "showing reverence to man more than to God." To give you some idea of the arbitrary manner in which Henry acted on these occasions, and the way in which he interfered with his cathedral clergy, I shall briefly relate what befel William Raley, Bishop of Winchester. He had been elected to the bishopric by the unanimous consent of the chapter or members of the cathedral at Winchester. But Henry's consent had not been asked, and greatly enraged, he commanded the

people of Winchester to close the gates of the city against their bishop. Raley was a humble-minded man, and hoping to conciliate the King, whom he was quite unconscious of having offended, he walked barefooted and in mean apparel to the gates of Winchester, and in a gentle voice craved admittance to his cathedral church. But the gates were closely barred; none dared disobey the King's orders; so the unlucky prelate was forced to retire amid the jeers and insults of the rabble. He then fled to London; but the King's wrath followed him there. Henry forbade any one to sell his victim either food or clothing; and so the unfortunate man was obliged to seek shelter with the canons of Southwark, where, we are told, "he humbly waited for a change in the adverse times." Not content with persecuting the bishop himself, Henry vented his unmanly spite on the bishop's people, and allowed his officers to seize their goods and otherwise maltreat them. But William was not without friends. It will not surprise you to hear that Grostête, the good Bishop of Lincoln, who could never see injustice practised without remonstrance, determined to plead the cause of his meek-spirited brother. Accompanied by the Bishops of Worcester and Hereford, he hastened to Reading to rebuke the King for his tyrannical conduct. These three prelates were honest-hearted and brave men; and the King's wrath had no more terrors for them than the wrath of the meanest of his subjects. But Henry knew that he had acted in an unchristian spirit; and not caring to face Bishop Grostête's honest indignation, he fled in a most undignified manner when he heard of his approach. But the bishops were not to be so easily daunted. They hurried after the King, discovered his retreat, and entering his presence, begged him to lay aside his angry feelings, and to receive the Bishop of Winchester into his favour. But Henry's heart was hardened, and with his usual obstinacy he refused to listen to their wise suggestions. So the peace-making bishops were forced to retire without having gained their point. It is greatly to the credit of the Pope and Archbishop Boniface that they both endeavoured to bring the King to a right mind in the matter. Passionate men are often very kind-hearted, and so it was with Boniface. He was grieved that Henry should make himself so unpopular, and he wrote to him a letter full of wise and good advice. "I pray you, my lord," he says, "to listen to the petition of your prelates, and deign to recal the Bishop of Winchester to your favour, as a good King and a Prince who fears the Lord should do." Meanwhile, the Bishop of Winchester fled to France, where he was hospitably entertained by the French King. The people of Paris were loud in their indig-

nation against Henry. "Ha!" they exclaimed, "see how the King of England, who is so inactive against the enemies of his kingdom, persecutes and proscribes all his holy bishops. He refuses to allow this Bishop of Winchester, who hath long served him with diligence and fidelity, to enter his church, while he prefers to promote foreigners and strangers." At length public opinion and the remonstrances of the Pope compelled Henry to relent, and with an ill grace he allowed the Bishop to return to his diocese. It speaks well for William that the people rejoiced greatly at his return. He seems to have won the confidence and esteem of all. "For," says Matthew Paris, "hopes were confidently entertained that he would by his prudence and good sense, with which he abounded, strengthen the King, consolidate the kingdom, and bring his bishopric also to the best conditions."* William Raley hastened at once to Winchester, "to devote himself to the pastoral care of his desolate church," and to "reform its disordered condition."†

While these events were taking place, the Pope continued his exactions in England. He sent over a new legate, named Master Martin, who not only oppressed the clergy and people with fresh extortions, but appears also to have roused their vehement indignation by his pride and insolence. Loud were the complaints on all sides. The Bishops and Abbots indignantly exclaimed: "The King and the Pope both demand money; we are assailed and harassed on both sides; on the one we are oppressed, and on the other bound and bruised, as it were, between the hammer and the anvil, and are ground as between two millstones." The following manly and patriotic remonstrance was sent to Henry: "If," said they, "the Pope would turn his mental eye on the condition of the Primitive Church in England, and see what it was in the early ages, and what it is now, he would not shake the foundation of the Church, nor oppress it by exactions and afflictions of this kind, nor claim and extort from our churches what is not his. By the preaching of St. Augustine, the apostle of the English, King Ethelbert was converted to the faith of Christ, and instituted the churches of London, Rochester, and Canterbury, placing clerks and priests in one place, and monks in another. He assigned to them sufficient lands and possessions for their support, and deputed to them the sole office of performing Divine services in those places; of pouring forth praise and thanksgiving to God, day and night; of bestowing alms, and performing other works of piety, and of showing hospitality to the poor, according to

* Matthew Paris, vol. ii., p. 6.

† Ibid., p. 31.

the extent of their means. In like manner, other kings also made grants to the cathedrals and churches. If, therefore, this money be bestowed on the churches and monasteries for such holy purposes, by what right, we ask, can it be converted to other uses?"*

Henry now began to regret in earnest that he had given the Pope such a firm footing in England. But it was too late to recede. The mischief was done. To do Henry justice, however, he at length remonstrated against the tyranny. "My people," he said to the legate, "will not, nor can they now give anything either to me, their King, or to the Pope." But Henry was a weak-minded man; and there is little doubt but that he would have endeavoured to extort more money from his impoverished subjects, had not the nobles taken the law into their own hands. They swore that unless Martin departed from the kingdom at once, he and all his companions should be cut to pieces. Hearing this, Martin, all breathless with alarm, rushed into the King's presence, and demanded his protection. But Henry knew too well the temper of his people to promise any such assistance. The matter was now assuming a serious aspect. "Master Martin," said the King, "my barons can scarcely restrain themselves from rising against me because I have tolerated the depredations and injuries you have committed on the kingdom; even now I can scarcely restrain them in their fury from attacking you, and tearing you limb from limb." The King's words struck terror into the cowardly heart of the legate, and when he spoke his voice was weak and trembling. "I do pray your Majesty," said he, "out of love to God and reverence to the Pope, to allow me a free exit, and to permit me to depart in safety, under your conduct." The King swore with an oath that he might go if he chose.

Matthew Paris gives us a very amusing account of the hasty retreat of this foolish man. Robert Norris, the King's seneschal, accompanied him to the sea-coast. In terror of his life, Master Martin rode inconveniently close to the side of his guide; and when any passers-by met them, even if they were only honest country-folk, the legate was seized with such fear and trembling, that if possible he would have hidden himself under the ground. At length they approached a thick wood. Here Master Martin's fears altogether overpowered him; and seeing a good many countrymen assembled, inspecting the trees which were for sale, he exclaimed, in a voice trembling with fear: "Alas! alas! the time hath come at last. See! they are about to attack us. My lord and dear friend Robert, hast thou any son, relation, or

* Matthew Paris, vol. i., p. 501.

friend whom you desire to advance to any ecclesiastical benefice; I am ready to grant any request you may make—only protect me under the shadow of your wings. See! see! they are lying in wait to take my life.” Robert smiled contemptuously, and replied, with the dignity becoming a free and honest English knight, “God forbid, Master Martin, that any one of my relatives should through my means be thus admitted to an ecclesiastical benefice. I know not these men; but do you await me here, and I will hasten to them, and if they be evilly disposed, will show them the King’s warrant.” But Robert, who was a bit of a wag, could not resist amusing himself at the expense of the unlucky legate, who stood pale and trembling with fear. The honest peasants were only intent on their own business, and had not even noticed the legate’s approach. But Robert returned with a dejected countenance, and whispered to his companion: “It was with difficulty I checked their fury, and prevented them from tearing you to pieces. I therefore caution you to proceed steadily and cautiously, lest a worse thing happen to you.” Then, hoping to improve the occasion for the good of his country, he quietly added: “And further, let me tell you, when you set sail, if you are wise, never return, lest you should fall into the hands of those who seek your life.” Master Martin was not slow to take the hint. He set spurs to his horse, and reproaching his conductor for his delay, soon arrived at Dover, and embarked; his departure, as Matthew Paris says, rejoicing the hearts of many.

At this juncture, a ray of hope seemed to beam upon the country. Henry, roused and alarmed by the vehement complaint of his people, determined, in a fit of desperation, to bestir himself. Letters of remonstrance were despatched to Rome from the bishops, abbots, and clergy, and people of England; and the King himself now joined his requests with theirs, that England might be released from the Papal oppressions. An English cardinal at Rome, who had watched matters with considerable anxiety, begged the Pope to listen favourably to the representations of the English. “We have,” said he, “treated that people so long like beasts of burden, spurred and kicked them so unmercifully, that at last they begin to surprise us with their clamours, and break out into complaints, like Balaam’s ass. In short we lie under a general odium, and have made ourselves the aversion of all Christendom.” How far the Pope heeded the cardinal’s wise remark is evident from the following anecdote. One day, seeing some English priests in their copes and head-dresses, he asked where they were made; and on being told “in England,” he exclaimed: “Of a truth, England is our

garden of delights; truly is it an inexhaustible well, in which many things abound; therefore from many things many may be extorted.”* Had Henry stood firm and been wise enough to join with and support his people, all might still have been well. But his weak and wavering nature dared not face the wrath of the Pope; and, listening to evil councillors, he basely retired from the conflict, and returned to his former cowardly course. “So alarmed was he,” says Matthew of Westminster, “at the threats of the Pope, and so much did he tremble with fear, where no fear was, that he abandoned like a woman the designs he had adopted like a man, and his whole preparation vanished away like a cloud before the face of the sun when it shines.”†

I shall not here enter upon the long and violent struggle which shortly took place between the King and his sorely-tried subjects. You have already read in your history the account of the disastrous struggle, and the wretched state to which the country was reduced during the civil war between Henry and his barons, headed by the brave Simon de Montfort. My intention now is to keep as much as possible to the events connected with the history of our Church. Before concluding this chapter, I will just say a few words about the manner in which God’s service was conducted in the cathedrals and churches at this time. You will see that, with some few exceptions, it was performed much in the same manner as our cathedral service now is. First of all, a law was made that the Lord’s Day should be duly observed, and no business of any kind transacted. People were bound also to go to church on the Saints’ Days, or Holy Days, as they are called, that they might put aside for a short time the world and its toil, and join in the service of God’s house. At all churches and cathedrals a correct copy of the mass or service for Holy Communion was to be kept, and also the service for general prayer. Instead of the Psalms and prayers all being collected together in one book, as we have them now, there were different books used for different parts of the service. Some of these I will explain to you. First there was the “Legend,” as it was called, or book of the lives of the saints, to be read on Holy Days, according to the rubric. This book also prescribed the lessons to be read for morning service, or matins—taken for the most part from the Old and New Testaments. Then there was another book, containing short sentences selected from the Psalms, to be sung on particular occasions. This book contained also the collects and responses. Then there was a Book of Hymns, and another book of prayers;

* Matthew Paris, vol. ii., p. 164.

† Matthew of Westminster, vol. ii., p. 264.

also a special rubric book, which contained directions for performing the service; so that you see they had not, as we have now, rubrics and directions at the head of each prayer, but a book which contained special rules for the performance of the services.* Such a book must have been very useful, preventing the disorder and confusion which would often have ensued had each clergyman been allowed to conduct the services according to his own fancy. I would just add that special anthems were chosen for special days; and great care was taken that the choir should sing them well and reverently, and the Psalms were chanted as we chant them now in many of our churches, and in all our cathedrals. In one important respect, however, the service of our English Church then differed from the service now. It is to be regretted that the greater part of the prayers were in the Latin language, so that the ignorant were taught more by the eye than by the ear; and though in heart they might join in the gorgeous and imposing service, their lips, for the most part, were silent. If we now refuse to join heartily with our lips in God's service, can we plead ignorance of the language as an excuse for our wilful indifference?

CHAPTER XXII.

HENRY III., *continued*.—1250 TO 1269.

ARCHBISHOP BONIFACE MAKES A VISITATION OF HIS CLERGY—HIS UNPOPULAR CONDUCT—ENTRY INTO LONDON—SCANDALOUS SCENE IN BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH—RETREAT OF THE ARCHBISHOP—THE INJURED CANONS APPLY TO THE KING FOR REDRESS, BUT FAIL TO SECURE IT—BOLD AND PATRIOTIC CONDUCT OF FALK, BISHOP OF LONDON—HIS WISE SPEECH—ENERGY AND ACTIVITY OF BISHOP GROSTÊTE—FINDING THE POPE FAIL IN HIS PROMISES, HE GOES TO ROME—INTERVIEW WITH THE POPE—HE IS TREATED WITH SCORN AND DERISION—NOBLE REMONSTRANCE OF THE ITALIAN CARDINALS—GROSTÊTE'S FAILINGS—HIS HASTY AND UNWISE BEHAVIOUR WITH REGARD TO JOHN MANSEL—RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GROSTÊTE AND THE KING—DEATH OF BISHOP GROSTÊTE—HIS CHARACTER AS DESCRIBED BY MATTHEW PARIS—DEATH OF KING HENRY—HIS PIETY—HIS LOVE FOR CHURCH BUILDING, AND TRUE TASTE IN ARCHITECTURE—CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHAPTER-HOUSE—REBUILDING OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

I AM now going to tell you how unpopular Archbishop Boniface made himself. In the year 1250, he determined on a general visitation of his clergy; to inquire how matters were going on throughout his province. The result of this really wise measure proved, however, most unfortunate. The people seem

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 521.

to have entertained the idea that the Archbishop was more eager to grasp what money he could than to reform abuses. And I fear there was some truth in this. Although Boniface was only doing his duty in visiting his clergy, the manner in which he acted was most unjustifiable. He began with his own monks at Canterbury, where he was much disliked. From thence he travelled to Rochester, where he extorted some money, and made himself very obnoxious by his rough uncourteous manner. When the monks appealed to Henry to redress their grievances, the only answer they received was this: "I cannot compel the Archbishop to act with justice or humility, lest I should cause offence to his family, especially the Queen, as he is of such high and noble birth." Boniface now approached the city of London. Here matters reached a climax. The Primate, gorgeously attired in full pontificals, and mounted on a handsome palfrey, rode into the city attended by a numerous band of foreigners. Their bright armour and polished swords glittered ominously from beneath their priestly garments, showing plainly that they intended to compel rather than to persuade. Such a sight as this was not likely to reassure or conciliate the Londoners. As Boniface turned his head from one side to the other, no friendly cheering fell on his ear, but muffled sounds of discontent and aversion or silent looks of hatred greeted him. The Archbishop was a hot-tempered irritable man, half warrior, half priest; and this ominous silence mortified and annoyed him. On the morrow he visited the priory of St. Bartholomew; but the cold reception he had received chafed his haughty spirit, and he was in no mood to deal gently or wisely with the monks.

As Boniface approached the church, he was met by the sub-prior, followed by the brethren of the convent in solemn procession. They bore in their hands numbers of lighted tapers, and were gorgeously attired in richly embroidered cloaks. But pre-eminently above the rest was the sub-prior, who wore on his shoulders a magnificent garment handsomely embroidered, and ornamented with jewels. The whole affair appears to have been badly managed. The procession crowded into the choir of the church, where the Archbishop and his suite were squeezed together. It was a hot day in May, and the stifling atmosphere tended to increase rather than allay the Primate's ill humour. He was in no mood to listen quietly to the remark of one of the canons; "We have," said the priest, "a wise and experienced Bishop, who visits us when necessary; and we cannot and ought not to accept the visitation of any other, lest we should seem to hold our own Prelate in contempt." This was more than Boniface could endure. His foreign blood was all on fire, and, for-

getting the dignity of his office, he burst into an uncontrollable fit of rage. Rushing on the unlucky sub-prior, he dealt him several furious blows on his face and breast, exclaiming with a loud voice, "Thus will I deal with all English traitors." The canons now rushed forward, and endeavoured to release their sub-prior from the grasp of the enraged Primate. But Boniface was a powerful man, and withal as much a soldier as a priest. Shaking his unfortunate victim with all his might, he thrust him with violence against one of the stalls, and trampled his costly cloak beneath his feet. The indignation of the citizens was now fairly roused. They rushed in a body on the Archbishop, and as they thrust him back, his pontifical robes were thrown aside, and, to the astonishment of all, the Primate of England, the messenger of the God of peace, was discovered encased in complete armour. "Truly," they shouted, "this foreigner hath come among us not to visit or correct errors, but to excite a battle." While this most unseemly fray was going forward in the choir, the armed followers of the Archbishop vented their cowardly rage on the defenceless canons, wounding, bruising, and trampling them under foot. The whole city was now in an uproar, and the Archbishop, in terror of his life, fled secretly and in haste to the river, where he managed to embark amid the angry shouts of the enraged citizens. You will, I doubt not, feel astonished at the disgraceful scene I have just described, and wonder that an Archbishop could have acted in a manner so utterly unworthy of a minister of God. But you must bear in mind that English people in those days were rougher and more unpolished than they are now. If angry passions rankled in the heart of a man, he showed his feeling at once by acting with open violence, and having, as we should say, his "rage out." A man who behaves thus is but little worse than he who conceals his ill-will, and allows it to rankle in his breast. In these days, decency withholds people, at least in the higher ranks of life, from dealing out blows; but bitter words and angry thoughts are as often indulged in now as formerly, and are quite as sinful in the sight of Him "to whom all hearts are open."

The next day a sorry procession wended its way to the King's palace at Westminster. Four of the canons, with torn garments, and wounded and bleeding flesh, limped along, as best they were able, headed by the unfortunate sub-prior on horseback, who, groaning with pain, was unable to proceed, and had to be carried back to the infirmary; where he remained for a long time, hanging between life and death. The unfortunate canons of St. Bartholomew got but little sympathy from Henry.

He dared not offend the Archbishop, who, by promises and threats, contrived to silence the clamours of the monks and citizens. Fulk, Bishop of London, was a brave and patriotic man, and although the King and Archbishop were all-powerful and leagued against him, he boldly defended the monks of St. Bartholomew, and was excommunicated accordingly. Some years afterwards, at a council held in London, to consider whether more money should be granted to the Pope, this brave man stood up, and in opposition to the King, the Pope, and the Archbishop, he exclaimed with noble indignation, "Before I will give my consent for the Church to be subjected to such an injurious state of slavery, I will cut off my head, and free myself from this intolerable oppression." The King's wrath was roused, and the most unjust reproaches were heaped upon Fulk; but he quietly said, "Let the Pope and the King, who are stronger than I am, take away my bishopric, which they cannot do with justice; let them take away the mitre, the helmet will still remain!"—meaning that no persecution would restrain him from fighting in the cause of his injured and oppressed country. On another occasion, when it was urged by the partisans of Rome that all the churches in England belonged to the Pope, Fulk wisely remarked, "That is true, if it be for their defence and protection, but not if to enjoy and appropriate the fruits of them; as we say, all belongs to the prince, whereby we understand for their protection, not for their destruction." This admirable reply contained the principle that should be at the foundation of all right government, and it was unanswerable.

I am now going to tell you something more about Grostête, Bishop of Lincoln. I hope you have not forgotten what I said about his patriotism in my nineteenth chapter. Grostête was a man who could never be idle. Whatever he undertook he did it with zeal and heartiness. He allowed no one to help him in his work, but was continually traversing his diocese from one end to the other, searching into abuses himself, and exposing and punishing offenders. Wherever he went, he preached with vigour and earnestness, compelling both clergy and people to listen to his discourses, whether they were willing or not. There is no doubt that on several occasions his zeal got the better of his judgment; but for all this we are bound to admire the spirit and energy with which he acted. I have already told you that the chief aim of Grostête's life was to resist the unlawful demands of the Romish Church, and to stir up the King and people to assert their liberty. The overwhelming difficulties which beset the patriotic Bishop, and which would have crushed *most men*, only nerved him to fresh exertions. But he was

struggling, almost unaided, against fearful odds. On one occasion, after he had extorted a promise from the Pope that he would punish certain offenders in his diocese, he discovered, to his mortification, that they had been forgiven, and allowed to depart unpunished. Grostête accordingly sent letters of remonstrance to the Pope ; but, finding he paid no heed to them, he determined on going himself to Rome, hoping that a private interview with the Pontiff would have some effect. Grostête was then an old man, and it must have required no small amount of resolution to set off and cross the seas ; on an errand, too, that we may be sure appeared, even to him, almost hopeless. But the Bishop of Lincoln was not a man to leave off striving while there was hope. On arriving at Rome, he at once demanded an interview with the Pope, and taxed him with his want of faith. "My Lord and holy Father," said he, "I blush at being defeated in my purpose, for the effecting of which I confidently relied on your letters and promises ; and now I am deceived in my expectation, for those whom I believed I had subdued have gone away free, to my disgrace and confusion." With a scowling brow the Pope replied, "Brother, what is this to you ? You have freed your soul, we have done them a favour. Is thine eye evil because I am good ? Depart, and urge not this matter further." So the good Bishop's plan was defeated, and with a deep-drawn sigh he turned away, exclaiming with bitter earnestness : "Oh ! money, money, how great is your power at this Roman court !" The truth of this remark only increased the Pope's irritation. As Grostête retired amid the jeers of the Italians, he passionately exclaimed, "Who is this raving old man, this deaf and foolish dotard, who in his audacity dares to judge of my actions ? By Peter and Paul, if it were not that my innate generosity restrained me, I would precipitate him into such an abyss of confusion and shame that he would be a subject of talk, and an object of amazement and horror to the whole world." Some of the Cardinal brethren, who stood by, endeavoured to moderate the Pope's anger. The fame of the Bishop of Lincoln had reached their ears, and they generously offered to defend the friendless foreigner, who had come across the seas on a true and noble errand. "Your holiness," said they, "it does not become us to institute any severe proceedings against this Bishop, for, to say the truth, what he says is correct. We cannot condemn him. He is a Catholic, yea, a most holy one ; more religious, more holy, of a more correct life than ourselves ; and indeed he is believed to have no equal, much less a superior, amongst all prelates. He is zealous in the cause of justice, a reader in the schools of

theology, a preacher to the people, a lover of chastity, and a persecutor of simonists.”* You will admire the generosity of these Italian priests, who could honour what was true and good in the character of a foreign bishop, even at the expense of incurring the furious wrath of their master. It is pleasant to find that justice and truth could be honoured even at the court of Rome.

As I have told you much that we must admire in the character of Bishop Grostête, I have no right to hide his failings. We often find that men of strong and sterling character also have strong passions to control. So it was with the Bishop of Lincoln. He was so earnest and energetic in all that he undertook, that he could ill brook any opposition, and when it came, his fiery temper altogether got the mastery over him. To prove what I say, I will just relate a short anecdote. On one occasion Henry had appointed a clergyman named John Mansel to fill the vacant living of Thame, which was in the Bishop of Lincoln’s diocese. It so happened, however, that Grostête had intended to bestow it on another man, and when he heard of the King’s determination he was greatly enraged. The Bishop appears to have had the right on his side; but this does not excuse the hasty manner in which he acted. We must own that the conduct of John Mansel on this occasion contrasts most favourably with that of the Bishop. Finding that the quarrel between the King and Grostête was likely to become serious, he generously refused to accept the benefice, exclaiming: “Far be it from me, my Lord the King, to be the cause of any dispute or disturbance arising between such illustrious personages. I give way patiently. God will sufficiently provide for me at His good pleasure as long as you are alive. The Bishop of Lincoln is much irritated; and in order that I may not be the cause of any further disagreement arising or scandal being spread abroad, I resign this church.” The King, finding the Bishop, as Matthew Paris says, “unbecomingly violent,” and threatening to lay his bishopric under an interdict, gave way, and no longer urged the appointment of John. Thus appeased, Grostête consented to preach before the King in public—and to show that all former animosity between them was forgotten, he extolled the King’s justice, and John’s humility, in his sermon. But religious deeds have far more influence for good than religious words; and though I doubt not the Bishop’s sermon was truthful and eloquent, his hasty and inconsistent conduct made an impression on the minds of men not easily to be effaced. In the year 1253, Bishop Grostête died. In summing up his character I think I cannot do better than quote the words of Matthew Paris, who,

* Matthew Paris, vol. iii., p. 38.

although he fully appreciates Grostête's noble traits, is not blind to his failings. "During his life, the Bishop of Lincoln openly rebuked the Pope, and the King. He corrected the prelates and reformed the monks. In him the priests lost a director, clerks an instructor, scholars a supporter, and the people a preacher. He had shown himself a persecutor of the unholy; a careful examiner of the Holy Scriptures; a bruiser and despiser of the Romans. He was hospitable and profuse, civil, cheerful and affable at table for partaking of bodily nourishment; and at the spiritual table devout, mournful, and contrite. In the discharge of his pontifical duties he was attentive, indefatigable, and worthy of veneration."*

Most of his own clergy attended the death-bed of their good Bishop, and he was honoured and obeyed to the last moment of his life. Grostête was a learned man, and left several valuable works behind him.

And now I think I have related all the events of any importance connected with the English Church in this reign. I have dwelt longer on it than I had intended; but it is an important period in many respects, and I hope you have read carefully and with some interest all I have told you about it. Henry III. died in the year 1269. I have shown you a good deal that is unworthy in his character. I will therefore now mention one or two good points. First of all, he possessed a deep feeling of reverence for the Christian faith; joining heartily and fervently in the services of the Church. In this respect, he set a noble example to his court and people, and induced many to take pleasure in worshipping God. Matthew Paris, who boldly exposes the King's faults, thus speaks of him: "In proportion as Henry was deficient in prudence and worldly actions, so he was the more distinguished for his devotion to the Lord." When seized with sickness, the King's first thought was to beg that he might be prayed for in all the churches of his kingdom; feeling sure that God would hear and receive the devout prayers of his people; and when his eldest son, Prince Edward, lay dangerously ill, he wrote to all the clergy in and near London, that they might pray for his preservation; he also requested that a special prayer might be said daily in all churches for him and his queen. By such pious deeds did this King devoutly acknowledge the hand of God. Henry's chief delight was to superintend the building of our churches. As an architect his taste was most admirable. Many of the noble cathedrals and churches which sprang up under his auspices still stand, and are fitting monuments of the piety and liberality

* Matthew Paris, vol. iii., p. 50.

of their royal founder. "On such works," says Matthew of Westminster, "he expended large sums of money, as becomes a most Christian King who believes beyond all doubt that a treasure incorruptible is reserved for him in heaven."* One of the noblest works of the kind in which Henry was engaged was the building of the Chapter House at Westminster, and the improvements and reconstruction of the Abbey Church. As the glorious pile emerged from the hands of the skilful builders, the King might be seen standing amongst the workmen, eager and full of interest, encouraging them by his advice, and cheering them by his approval. Whatever may be our opinion of Henry III., that noble Abbey Church, which for centuries has stood in the midst of our city, and is still its glory and boast, proves beyond a doubt his pious devotion and careful regard for the worship and honour of Almighty God.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EDWARD I.—1269 to 1292.

PROSPEROUS REIGN OF EDWARD I.—ARCHBISHOP BONIFACE DIES IN FAVOUR WITH THE PEOPLE—ROBERT KILWARDBY, THE FIRST MENDICANT FRIAR RAISED TO THE PRIMACY—HE FOUNDS THE MONASTERY OF BLACKFRIARS—HIS DEATH—REVIEW OF THE MONASTIC SYSTEM—ITS EARLY USEFULNESS AND GRADUAL DECAY—EDWARD ENDEAVOURS TO CURTAIL THE POWERS OF THE CLERGY—PASSING OF THE STATUTE OF MORTMAIN—WISDOM OF THE MEASURE—INCREASED PROSPERITY OF THE UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE—CHARACTER OF ARCHBISHOP PECKHAM—HIS VIGOROUS MEASURES AND SEVERITY TOWARDS OFFENDERS—WISE LAWS PASSED AT THE SYNOD AT LAMBETH—DOCTRINES OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH UPHOLD—PECKHAM COMPELS THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD TO RESIDE ON HIS DIOCESE—LAWS PASSED FOR THE CLERGY—DEATH OF PECKHAM.

AFTER the scenes of folly and oppression I have been describing, it will be a relief to you to turn to something different. The reign of the noble-hearted and patriotic Prince Edward I. was a prosperous one for our Church and country; and for a time both King and people effectually resisted the encroachments of the Church of Rome. It speaks well for Archbishop Boniface that he was in favour with this upright prince. During the wars with the barons in the last reign, he had incurred King Henry's anger by siding for a time with his injured subjects. Possibly the Archbishop may have wished to make some amends for his tyrannical conduct. At all events, the English people appre-

* Matthew of Westminster, vol. ii. p. 242.

ciated the good-will of their primate, and no longer regarded him with the same hatred and suspicion as formerly. Boniface did not live to place the crown upon the head of Prince Edward. The ceremony was performed by Robert Kilwardby, his successor. This man was a Dominican. He was the first Mendicant Friar elevated to the Primacy. The friars were now at the very height of their prosperity and usefulness; and as they had not as yet lost their hold on the respect and affection of the people, the appointment of one of their order to the Primacy was hailed with general satisfaction. But Kilwardby's life was a brief one. He died in the year 1279, at Rome, where he retired, having been made a cardinal by the Pope. Before his retirement he founded the Dominican monastery of Blackfriars. A friar himself, Kilwardby naturally did all in his power to support and encourage his own order; and in the building of the monastery, he was assisted by King Edward and his noble-minded consort, Queen Eleanor. On the banks of the Thames, which was then a clear and bright river, rose a magnificent range of monastic buildings, with its beautiful gardens sloping down to the river's edge. Centuries have since passed away, and the peaceful scene has vanished. The graceful pile of monastic buildings with its nobly designed chapel have given place to close dirty streets, and squalid poverty; while nought is left now but the bare name to remind us of what the magnificent monastery of Blackfriars once was.

As soon as Edward I. was seated on the throne, he began with boldness and vigour to reform abuses, and administer justice to his subjects. He soon gained the confidence of his people, and this it was that enabled him to carry out more than his father would have dared even to attempt. The wealth and power of the clergy was now enormous, and though Edward was a man who could honour what was holy and true in God's ministers, he wisely considered it his duty to restrain their increasing power within due limits. You must bear in mind that the state of the Church in those days was very different to what it is now. Fired with religious zeal and devotion, the barons and wealthy men of England bestowed large sums of money on the clergy and monasteries. It was a noble answer which Richard, Earl of Cornwall, gave to Matthew Paris when asked by him the cost of a magnificent Cistercian abbey he had founded in Gloucestershire: "I have expended," said the Earl, "ten thousand marks on the erection of the church only; and would to God that what I have laid out upon my own castle at Wallingford had been spent as wisely and as well." The Bible tells us that "God loveth a cheerful giver;"—and doubtless these willing

offerings to His Church were acceptable in His sight. It is therefore the more to be regretted that much of the wealth so piously bestowed should have been applied to unworthy purposes. But I need scarcely remind you that in the early days of the monasteries it was not so. The hold gained by the monks on the respect and love of the people is an unanswerable proof that the work God had given them to do they had performed wisely and well. Now before I tell you how a system, so excellent in itself, became abused, I would have you once more recall to mind all I have said about the worth and usefulness of the monks and their monasteries. Let me first remind those who would associate the name of "monk" with ignorance and superstition, that it is to the unwearied labour and zeal of these pious men that we owe, under God, the preservation of the Holy Scriptures. Do we accuse the monks of superstition? I answer, to us they have bequeathed the precious and undying record of Christ's love to man, which they knew so well how to value and preserve. But though God, in His wisdom, raised them up for this exalted work, we in our ignorance refuse to acknowledge the debt of gratitude we owe to them. Would we accuse the monks of ignorance? the plain facts of history sternly contradict such a notion. Need I remind you, that when our country was all but annihilated by war and oppression, and men's minds were obscured by the thick darkness of prejudice and ignorance, it was in these sacred buildings alone that the light of truth and wisdom could be found. From the time-honoured walls of our monasteries issued forth men whose holy and self-denying lives witnessed to the truth of the system under which they had been brought up. The names of Bede, St. Boniface, Lanfranc, Anselm, Hubert Walter, Stephen Langton, Edmund Rich, and Matthew Paris must surely rescue the monasteries from the charge of ignorance. It is to such men as these that we owe a deep debt of gratitude. Though long since passed to their rest, we, their descendants, are now reaping the benefit of their labours, in the free laws we possess and the faithful records they have left us of the history of our country. Never forget, therefore, that when you hear the monasteries spoken of with contempt, that the noble-minded Christian men whose names I have just recorded, and numbers besides whose names I have not time to mention, were all trained in the monastic schools. The following words, spoken by an Englishman of olden times, well express the general feeling with regard to these establishments: "What are such religious dwellings," he exclaims, "but the camps of God, where the soldiers of Christ our King keep guard, and the recruits are trained against the assaults of spiri-

tual wickedness?"* I am sure that all I have said will help you to guard against the false notion that because the monasteries became corrupt, and failed to do their duty in after-years, therefore they were bad in themselves and ought never to have been encouraged. People who argue thus ignorantly imagine that the sloth and superstition which gradually crept in amongst the monks in later ages clung to them and their system from the very first; but the facts of history teach us otherwise. Let us be careful to acquaint ourselves with them, for they are unanswerable.

It is now my painful duty to tell you, as briefly as possible, in what respect the monastic system fell away from its original simplicity and purity. Of this we may be sure, that when the monasteries began to sink in the estimation of the people, they were no longer doing their Master's work in the same conscientious painstaking manner as formerly. The zenith of their usefulness was past, and they were on the decline; but their end had not yet come. St. Paul tells us that "they who will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction." This truth may well be applied to the monasteries. The enormous wealth bestowed upon them by the piety of the nation led in the end to the most selfish luxury and waste. Instead of employing the money in improving their lands and in doing good to the poor, many of the monks seized all they could get, and spent it on their own gratifications. Plunged, as they now were, into a state of slothful ease and luxury, a life of strict discipline and self-denial became impossible. Forgetting their high calling and the work of love they had undertaken for Christ, the inmates of many of the monasteries became indolent, indifferent, and worldly, and neglecting their poorer brethren, soon lost their hold on the love and respect of the people. Edward I. saw with alarm the growing evil, and, with his usual forethought and wisdom, determined to check the increase of the monasteries, curtail the power of the monks, and, if possible, divert some of the wealth of the nation into another channel. Accordingly he succeeded in passing a law called the Statute of Mortmain, which Matthew of Westminster tells us, the King, the nobles, and even the prelates approved of. I will try and explain it to you:—Hitherto all landed property, possessed by the clergy, was exempt from certain taxes, which the laity who held estates were bound to pay to the King. Accordingly, as year by year the lands of the monasteries increased, the revenues of the Crown gradually diminished. By the Statute of

* Massingberg's History of the Reformation, p. 83.

Mortmain it was decreed that no landed property should be given to the Church without the King's consent. But he was a man of sincere piety, and would have shrunk from employing the wealth diverted from the monasteries to his own purposes. He merely desired that other good works should be encouraged as well. The benefit of this wise measure soon became apparent. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge, which hitherto had been almost overlooked in the rage for founding monasteries, now grew and flourished; and while numbers of English youths flocked to these seats of learning, the need of monastic schools was less felt than in days gone by.

I must now tell you something about Archbishop Peckham, who had succeeded Kilwardby in the Primacy. A Franciscan monk himself, Peckham was a vigorous supporter of the Mendicant orders; but though firmly attached to the system under which he had been brought up, he was not blind to its defects. He was a practical as well as a learned man, so he determined to correct abuses, and do all in his power to enlighten the minds of his people. The account that we have of Archbishop Peckham's visitations gives us the idea that he was a severe and yet a just man. He refused to sanction any vice which he himself hated, and avoided punishing offenders with prompt severity. It is rather surprising that a man of Peckham's earnestness should have failed to work cordially with a prince like Edward. But the reason is plain. In one important respect they were at issue. Peckham was not a true patriot at heart. Having owed his appointment to the Pope, he secretly encouraged the Papal encroachments in the English Church; and it was this that caused the honest-minded Edward to suspect his designs, even when they were good and true. In the year 1281 Archbishop Peckham held a synod at Lambeth. He then endeavoured with praiseworthy zeal to check the growing indifference and corruption of the clergy. "Many churchmen," runs one of the canons, "who have a talent for the pulpit refuse to preach in those places which most need instruction. The young children ask bread and no man breaks it unto them. The poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst. To prevent this misfortune, we order that every parish priest be enjoined to explain the fundamental and necessary part of religion to the people at least every quarter; and this is to be done in plain intelligible language that may be easily understood."* The canon then goes on to state which are the articles of the faith to be upheld. Let those who would tell us that the Church of England *then* is wholly

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 580.

and entirely distinct from the Church of England *now*, read carefully these fourteen articles which Archbishop Peckham enforced. Some day I would have you study them yourselves, and possibly you will be surprised to find, that our own creeds now contain most of their doctrines. I would have you remember, too, that these doctrines form the foundation not only of our English faith in these days, but have been held as sacred by the one Catholic and Apostolic Church in all ages, and in all countries; although, unhappily, in some instances error has been mingled with the truth. God grant that the blessed doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of our Saviour, the resurrection of the body, and the hope of eternal life, may be preserved to us in our creeds and liturgy until the end of time.

The rest of the laws ordained at this synod by Archbishop Peckham breathe a spirit of true piety, and on the whole are singularly free from error and superstition. Peckham was not a man to make laws and then neglect to enforce them. He treated both high and low with the same unswerving severity. Finding that the Bishop of Lichfield lived away from his diocese, and, being a foreigner, was unable to preach to his people in their own tongue, he instantly sent for him, and commanded him to return and reside on his diocese, on pain of deprivation. When the abashed Prelate made his appearance at the Archbishop's palace at Lambeth, Peckham reprimanded him severely, exclaiming, "Since you have the misfortune to be unqualified to preach to your people, is it not therefore the more necessary that you should dwell among them, and spend your revenue in hospitality and in relieving the poor?" These words were unanswerable, for the man who uttered them carried out that principle in his own life. Sometime after Peckham enacted some more wise laws which he made binding on all the clergy. Among other things, priests were to take care that Divine service in their churches was performed with due reverence and solemnity. They were to be diligent in preaching the word of God, and in administering the sacraments, and if disabled or disqualified for the work, they were to take care that good and learned men were appointed to supply their place. The necessity of such laws as these shows us plainly that many of the clergy at this time sadly failed in their duty. Archbishop Peckham died in the year 1292, and for the space of two years the see of Canterbury remained vacant.

CHAPTER XXIV.

EDWARD I., *continued*.—1292 to 1297.

WEALTH AND IMPORTANCE OF THE JEWS—REASONS WHY THEY WERE ENCOURAGED BY KINGS AND HATED BY THE PEOPLE—THEIR EXPULSION FROM ENGLAND—ELECTION OF ROBERT WINCHELSEY TO THE PRIMACY—APPROVAL OF ALL PARTIES—HIS MAGNIFICENT ENTHRONIZATION IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL—STERN CONDUCT OF EDWARD WITH REGARD TO THE CLERGY—HIS UNWARRANTABLE DEMANDS—HE COMPELS THEM TO SUBMIT—ARCHBISHOP WINCHELSEY OFFENDS THE KING BY HIS OPPOSITION—EDWARD'S DECIDED MEASURES AGAINST THE POPE—HIS CONCILIATORY SPEECH TO HIS PEOPLE—WINCHELSEY'S EMOTION—THE PRIMATE, THE PRELATES, AND NOBLES ALL SWEAR FEALTY TO EDWARD.

It is now quite time that I told you something about the Jews, who for centuries had settled in large numbers in England, and had become a most important part of the community. We read a great deal in history of the sad cruelties exercised on these people ; but before we form a decided opinion on the subject, and wholly condemn their persecutors, it will be well for us to view fairly both sides of the case. During the Norman period, while the greater portion of the English people were engrossed in warlike pursuits, the Jews, by industriously following all kinds of useful and peaceable arts, contrived to amass great riches. Most of the cleverest goldsmiths, jewellers, and physicians were Jews. But the chief way by which they accumulated so much wealth, was by lending money to others and requiring a large interest in return. The nobles of England, and often the kings themselves, were very glad to borrow money of the Jews, who had always plenty in their coffers with which to supply them. You can, therefore, well imagine that it was the policy of the court to protect these people. The primates also were generally favourable to them, and this fact made them the more hated, and suspected by the lower classes, who viewed this unfortunate people with feelings of peculiar jealousy and aversion. During the wars with the barons in Henry the Third's reign, the Jews, who had frequently supplied the King with money, in his difficulties, strenuously supported him in his opposition to the people, and this, as you may imagine, greatly increased their unpopularity. In many instances the persecution and suffering they underwent were very great ; and shame be to the so-called Christian men who could sanction and encourage such deeds of cruelty ! Still the fact that the Jewish people had become wealthy and prosperous shows us that for years they must have been left in undisturbed possession of their rights. In the year 1290, however, the storm which had

long been gathering over them burst at last ; and the King, whether willing or unwilling, was forced to yield to the clamours of his people, and consent to the total banishment of all Jews from the kingdom. It was an extreme measure ; and, we must own, a cruel and unjust one, too. But something may be said by way of excuse. In one very important matter, the Jews had deeply offended the English nation. Had they quietly held to their own religious opinions, and allowed others to do the same, possibly they might have been permitted to remain in peace ; but, taking advantage of the increased lukewarmness and carelessness in the Church, they openly assaulted the faith of Christ, and ridiculed its most solemn doctrines. The love of the Saviour still burnt (though in many cases I fear but feebly) in the hearts of all ; it only needed opposition to fan the spark into a flame. Religious zeal and popular indignation were just now at their height. Every man who professed to love his Saviour, considered it a sacred duty to punish the blasphemous Jews ; and the religious mind of Edward was led instinctively to join in the popular cry : " Banish the unbelievers from the kingdom ! " Peckham joined his voice with the rest, and the ruthless mandate went forth. Nearly sixteen thousand Jews were banished the kingdom, and so great was the violence of the people, that the King was forced to interfere for their protection. Such cruel measures doubtless seem to you most unchristian ; but I would have you bear in mind that our ancestors did not allow the Jewish people to remain in unbelief without making strenuous efforts to bring them to the faith of Christ. With a true missionary spirit, the Friars diligently preached to the Jews, and Henry III. encouraged them in the good work by building and endowing an asylum for converted Jews in Chancery Lane, which his son Edward afterwards generously supported. Many good Christian men resorted to this place, and spent their time in confirming their Jewish brethren in the faith.

In the year 1293, Robert Winchelsey was unanimously elected by the King and Chapter of Canterbury to the primacy which had been rendered vacant by the death of Peckham. Winchelsey was well known to be a man of strict moral character, learned, and, moreover, an eloquent preacher. His appointment, therefore, appears to have given general satisfaction. When the Archbishop elect was presented to Edward, he graciously expressed his approval of the monks' choice. Turning to Winchelsey he said, " Blessed be they of the Lord, who have unanimously elected thee to this dignity by the will of God ! " *Winchelsey, it appears, had also gained the goodwill of Pope Celestine, who willingly sanctioned his appointment. The*

account that has come down to us of the enthronization of Archbishop Winchelsey in Canterbury Cathedral gives a vivid idea of the importance with which our ancestors regarded such matters. The ceremony must have been beyond measure grand and imposing. The King, the Prince, together with all the great and noble of the land, thronged into the gorgeous cathedral, whose ancient walls had looked down for centuries on such varied and startling events. When we stand on the threshold of any of our great cathedrals now, and view with awe and wonder the spacious nave, the graceful arcade of arches (with their delicately carved mouldings) flowing almost imperceptibly the one into the other, we see before us only the shadow of what once was. The spirit has departed, only the cold lifeless body is left now. When, in ancient times, our cathedrals issued from the hands of the skilful architect, every window was filled with rich and costly stained glass, which when illuminated by the sunlight, threw down upon the tessellated pavement streams of light, dyed with azure, ruby, and amber. The walls of the sacred building, the elaborately carved roof, the pillars, the richly moulded arches and capitals, and, indeed, every part was covered with the most gorgeous colouring: red, purple, gold and yellow everywhere met the dazzled eye of the astonished beholder; and when, during service, the clergy wound in solemn procession up the nave, attired in their costly vestments, brilliant with gold and coloured embroidery, it must have added not a little to the imposing scene. On the occasion of Winchelsey's enthronization, the sight must have been peculiarly impressive; for the cathedral was filled from one end to the other with all the noblest of the land, while the service, always a grand one, was performed with unusual solemnity. After the Archbishop had knelt for some time at the altar, in private prayer, he rose, and extending his hands, pronounced God's benediction on the kneeling multitude. Then the swelling notes of the organ pealed through the long aisles of the sacred building. In a moment the vast assembly arose and with loud voices joined in that ancient and noble hymn which from time immemorial has been the heritage of the Christian Church: "We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord; all the earth doth worship thee, the Father Everlasting."

From all I have told you, it is clear that Edward was disposed to like and respect the new Primate; and therefore it is the more to be regretted that any misunderstanding should have *arisen* between them. But so it was. At first all things went *smoothly*. Winchelsey gained the favour of the King by *supporting* him in his measures against the Welsh, but shortly

afterwards he incurred the displeasure of his sovereign, by siding with the clergy in opposition to him. It appears that Edward, who was a staunch warrior, required the clergy as well as the laity to contribute towards the expenses of his wars. Nor was the demand without reason, for clergy as well as laity benefited by the prosperity of the kingdom. It so happened that for one year they had generously granted the King one-half of their incomes. But this was not enough. Assured of his own power and confident of his strength, Edward had the hardihood to demand from his clergy the same sum annually. A demand so unwarrantable struck consternation into the hearts of all. The prelates and monks hesitated, and prepared to resist. But they little knew the indomitable nature of the man with whom they had to deal. Edward had taken the law into his own hands, and woe be to that man who dared to resist his will! His triumph was complete. A large assembly of prelates and monks had gathered themselves together in the refectory at Westminster to consider in what manner they should answer the King's demand. Suddenly, we are told, the solemn conclave was interrupted by one of the King's knights, who rose up, and vehemently exclaimed, "My venerable man, this is the demand of the King. The annual half of the revenues of your churches—and if any one objects to this, let him rise up in the middle of the assembly, that his person may be recognised and taken note of; for that man is guilty of treason against the King's peace." The prelates felt the full force of the knight's words; they knew it was useless to resist, and so agreed to the King's demands. It was a prompt and masterly stroke of Edward's. Years ago, when the clergy felt sure of the support of the people, they had resisted successfully the power of the sovereign. Now the scene was changed. The nation had already begun to look with suspicion on men who often preferred ease to duty, so the clergy were left alone to battle with the strong will of a powerful and determined prince. Edward now made up his mind to push still further the victory he had gained; and when the Archbishop was holding a provincial synod at St. Paul's, the following peremptory mandate was sent in from the King: "Edward, by the Grace of God, King of England, to the honourable Fathers in God, Archbishops, Bishops, &c.:—We forbid you and every of you under penalty of forfeiting your possessions, that none of you make any constitution or canon, or assent to any such in your synod, which may turn to the disadvantage or damage of us, our ministers, or any other of our loyal subjects."* *But though in the end victorious, Edward was destined to meet*

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 609.

with some opposition. It came from a quarter from which he least expected it. Archbishop Winchelsey, alarmed for the safety of the Church, now boldly stood forth, and openly resisted the King's demands. From that hour the King and Primate were at variance. Both were in fault. Edward, headstrong and tyrannical as he had shown himself, was yet a man of sincere religious principle; and had the Archbishop proceeded with ordinary tact and judgment, I think in all probability the King would have listened to reason, and abated somewhat of his really unjust demands. But Winchelsey declared open war, and appealed to the Pope for assistance. This only made matters worse. All Edward's strong natural feelings were roused. He despised the man who could appeal to a foreign power for aid; and as for the Pope, he set his authority at defiance, and was glad of an opportunity of showing his own strength. While the King stood firm, the Pope was powerless. The papal Bull arrived, but was treated with the utmost contempt, and the Archbishop's estate was seized. But the King, at this time was not in a position to set the wishes of his subjects altogether at defiance; and although irritated by the Archbishop's untimely interference, he found it prudent for once to overlook his obstinacy. Edward had engaged in a war with France; but before he embarked, he wisely determined to conciliate his subjects, and secure their approval of the undertaking. Accordingly, when the Parliament assembled in Westminster Hall, Edward appeared in the midst of his people, followed by Prince Edward, his son, and the Primate. With all his faults King Edward was a generous honest-minded Englishman, and his sympathies were all with his country. The English people knew that their Prince was a true patriot at heart, and it was this that made them bear with his hard unyielding disposition. Edward now rose up to address the assembly. His straightforward manner and earnest eloquence commanded instant attention. All eyes were turned on the tall and handsome form of the warrior King, who knew so well how to rouse the sympathies of his subjects. "My people," said he, "our enemies in France and Scotland have forced upon me measures so unacceptable that I crave my subjects' forgiveness for having levied so much money from them; but God forbid that I should shrink from my duty. I go," he continued with fervour, "to expose my person in France for the public safety. If God be pleased to prosper my arms, and preserve my life, and I return, *receive me as you have now received me, and I will restore to you all that I have taken from you.* But if," he continued, *lowering his voice,* "I fall in the enterprise, I do beg of you

to crown my son Prince Edward, and he shall be your King in my place." As Edward uttered the last words, he turned his searching gaze on all present, and his eyes rested on the Archbishop, who, deeply touched by the King's earnest appeal, was moved to tears. The honest heart of Edward no longer doubted his sincerity; and when, together with the rest of the prelates and nobles, he swore fealty to the Crown, all the King's irritation vanished, the Archbishop's possessions were restored to him, and Edward once more felt secure in the goodwill and affection of the Primate and his people.

CHAPTER XXV.

EDWARD I., *continued*.—1297 to 1307.

DESTRUCTION OF THE SCOTTISH ARMY AT FALKIRK—CONDUCT OF EDWARD REVIEWED—THE SCOTCH APPEAL TO THE POPE—PATRIOTIC ANSWER OF THE ENGLISH BARONS—EDWARD'S CONTEMPT OF THE PAPAL AUTHORITY—BREACH BETWEEN THE KING AND ARCHBISHOP WINCHELSEY—DISAFFECTION OF THE NOBLES—WINCHELSEY JOINS WITH THEM IN THEIR REBELLION—THE KING'S GENEROUS CONDUCT WITH REGARD TO THE OFFENDING EARLS—HIS INTERVIEW WITH THE PRIMATE—HE REPROACHES HIM FOR HIS TREACHERY—WINCHELSEY'S DISMAY AND HUMILIATION—EDWARD'S DIGNIFIED BEHAVIOUR.

DURING the King's absence, the Scottish people with whom he had been at war, and almost subdued, made an attempt to recover their lost liberty, headed by the brave but unfortunate Sir William Wallace. At first their efforts were successful. They contrived to recover the town of Berwick, and to regain several castles that Edward had seized. But the stout warrior with whom they were waging this unequal war, soon appeared upon the scene, and totally routed the Scots at the fatal battle Falkirk. It is not my intention in this place to enter upon a history of Edward's wars, or to defend the relentless severity of his acts. I would only remark that it is often through seasons of dire affliction and trials that nations pass into a better and more prosperous condition. That this was the case with our own country you have already seen; and possibly could the Scotch have foreseen the advantages that would some day accrue to them from a union with England, they would have been more reconciled to the state of misery into which they were now plunged.

Edward's acts appear to us, at this distance of time, unjust and cruel; but it is difficult to judge how far a timely severity

may not have been necessary, and even in the end the most humane policy. As usual in those days, the Scots in their extremity, appealed to the Pope. Boniface VIII., hoping to humble Edward, sided with the Scottish people, and sent a Bull into England, commanding him to desist from any further attempt against Scotland. But the Pope looked in vain for support in England at this time. A weak yielding prince no longer sat upon the throne; but a patriot King, who gloried in encouraging his people in their independence. The Pope's Bull was treated with the utmost contempt, and the following resolute remonstrance sent to Rome, which I would have you bear in mind was signed by nearly one hundred barons and earls, who it is distinctly said represented the whole nation. After addressing Pope Boniface in a respectful manner, their general feeling of independence was expressed in the following words: "We have thoroughly weighed and examined your Bull, and are extremely shocked at its contents, which are wholly new and unprecedented. The pre-eminence, independency, and dignity of the English crown is such, that it has never been customary for the kings of England to appear before any foreign court to decide their claim; nor were they ever bound to submit to any such decision. We have come then to this unanimous resolution, which, by God's help, we intend never to depart from. That our Sovereign Lord, the King, is by no means obliged to own the jurisdiction of your court, or to submit to your Holiness's sentence with regard to his sovereignty over the kingdom of Scotland, or, indeed, in any other temporal manner whatsoever. Neither is your Holiness to expect any embassy from the King on this subject; because any such application would tend to lower the royal dignity and crown of England, be plainly subversive of the government, of the liberties, customs, and ancient laws of the country, for the maintenance of which we are all bound by oath, and by the grace of God are resolved to defend them to the utmost of our power."

A short time afterwards, the Pope promoted a certain William of Gainsborough to the See of Worcester. He sent over a Bull, in which he compelled the bishop elect to acknowledge that he alone had put him in possession of the see. Edward determined to stop any further aggression. He promptly sent for the bishop, commanded him to renounce the obnoxious clause in the Pope's Bull, and publicly to acknowledge that he held the property of the bishopric only by the *King's permission*, and not because the Pope had chosen to *grant it*. And further, to show his disapproval of the affront

offered to the crown, Edward fined the Bishop one thousand marks for presuming to accept the Pope's Bull.* By such manly and independent measures did the English King and people assert the freedom of their Church and country. Nor was Edward's spirited conduct lost upon others. His neighbour, Philip the Fair, King of France, followed his example, and ordered a Bull, which Pope Boniface had sent into his kingdom, to be publicly burnt, in order to show his people that he alone was their lawful head in temporal matters. Edward, relying on the sincerity of Winchelsey, and remembering the loyal tears he had shed in the Hall at Westminster, had appointed him one of the young prince's council during his absence. We have seen that the laws Edward made were always stern, and sometimes even tyrannical. Now, although the nation generally submitted to these laws and respected the sterling qualities of their patriot King, still there were some who determined to oppose Edward in what they considered his unjust claims. To the disgrace of the Primate, he secretly joined with the discontented barons. His motive for so doing was a most unworthy one. He cared little for the liberty of his country, but he longed to see the Pope's claim once more established in England; and so he considered that the surest way to obtain such a result would be to restrict the power of a prince who had vowed open hostility to the Court of Rome. But Winchelsey was unpopular with the people as well as with the King. His haughty bearing and singular want of judgment had made him many enemies: so that even the disaffected barons regarded him with suspicion, and doubted whether his motive for joining them was really a patriotic one. In a moment of folly and weakness, Winchelsey sent a letter written, by his own hand, to the earls with whom he had made common cause, affixing his seal to the document. This letter, which contained several treasonable propositions, fell into the King's hands. Edward was thunderstruck. Open-hearted and unsuspecting himself, he had firmly believed in Winchelsey's loyalty; and when he saw the fatal letter, his disappointment and annoyance were great. Although in some instances Edward I. acted with sternness and cruelty, his generous conduct on this occasion is worthy of all praise. Possibly he may have felt he had tried his people too far, and that the secret disaffection among his nobles was the result of his own grasping and relentless policy. However this may be, he wisely foresaw that a serious rebellion would best be averted by gentle and conciliatory means. A patriot himself, Edward could generously overlook the faults of

* Collier, vol. ii., p. 219.

those who were acting from patriotic motives. He sent for the rebellious earls, and frankly extending his hand, offered them his full and free forgiveness on condition of their paying him a certain sum as an acknowledgment that they had acted disloyally. "I wish not the death of those who are traitors to me," said Edward, "but that they may be converted and redeemed by their temporal possessions, and so live." Such unwonted generosity altogether overcame the traitor earls, and from that hour Edward and his barons were friends.

Winchelsey now received a summons to appear before the King. Utterly unconscious that his treachery had been discovered, he prepared to obey the royal summons; and followed by a numerous retinue, with great pomp and ceremony, approached the palace. The door of the council chamber was thrown open, and, with the dignity becoming his exalted rank, the Primate entered the King's presence. In a moment all his haughtiness vanished. The tall erect figure of the justly offended monarch stood before him. His dark eyes were fixed steadfastly upon Winchelsey as if to scan his every thought and intention; and with a look of withering scorn and contempt, he pointed to the letter which he held in his hand, and slowly but firmly muttered the word "traitor." Had Winchelsey been an honest and a true man, he would have braved that searching look of his sovereign; but his conscience condemned him, and overwhelmed with confusion and dismay, he prostrated himself before the King, and with a trembling voice, offered to resign all his property, yea, even his archbishopric, if the King would pardon his treachery. With a generosity worthy of his royal blood, Edward refused to condemn his fallen enemy. "In respect of your conduct," said the King, with dignity, "equity and justice shall be determined not by me, but by your peers and fellow bishops." But Edward felt he had been grossly deceived. He was not a man who could quietly overlook in another what he hated and avoided himself; and with a tone of suppressed passion, he addressed the now crestfallen and humbled Primate. "How often have I written to you in your visitation, when you were oppressing my clergy who were on my side, begging you not to proceed against them out of respect for me, till the tumult of war was over; but you refused to listen. In my absence, you have deprived them of their churches." Then, with passionate earnestness, he added: "I know the pride of thy heart, thy rebellion, and cunning: for *you have ever acted contentiously against me, and stirred up commotions.*" Winchelsey stood silent. He had no excuse to offer. All his manliness forsook him, and he wept like a child.

He implored forgiveness, and in tones of abject misery entreated the King to bless him. But Edward's innate reverence for holy things constrained him to respect the Primate as God's appointed minister, while at the same time he despised the man; and overcome by Winchelsey's entire submission, he approached him and said: "Holy father, it would ill beseem me to place my hands upon your head; it is I who should receive your blessing." With these words, the stalwart warrior reverently bowed his head and received the Primate's benediction.*

It was with a feeling of intense relief that Winchelsey retired from the presence of his offended sovereign. But justice must be satisfied. All the Primate's goods were confiscated, and he was reduced to beggary. In this abject condition he once more presented himself at the King's palace, and begged permission to cross the sea. Years had passed since Archbishop Becket, with haughty defiance, left the kingdom without the royal consent. Now things were wholly changed. "Permission to go," said Edward, "right willingly we grant, but permission to return, never shalt thou have. Never can we forget or forgive thy craft, thy subtlety, and thy treachery. From reverence to St. Thomas of Canterbury, and out of affection to thy Church, we have thus far restrained our anger; but favour at our hands, never expect. Merciless thou has been to others, mercy to thyself shall not be shown." Few regretted the fallen Primate, as he sailed from the shores of England; for he had made himself unpopular alike with King, clergy, and people.

The last year of Edward's life was spent in passing several wise measures for the benefit of the Church. As you have seen, his great aim was to join with his people in resisting the exactions and encroachments of the See of Rome. His measures were prompt and decided. The earls and barons of England had presented a petition to the King, entreating him to control the power of the Pope. First of all, they complained that most of the best livings were held by Italian priests, who for the most part lived away from their benefices. Secondly, the Pope now considered he had a right to appropriate the revenues of the religious houses for the benefit of his cardinals, and also seized a great many of the legacies which good men had bequeathed for pious uses. Thirdly, the money called "Peter's Pence," which you may remember was paid by our countrymen for the support of the College for English youths at Rome, was exacted to treble the just value. The King cheerfully and *readily responded to the just petition of his nobles.* He sum-

* *Matthew of Westminster*, vol. ii., p. 580.

moned the legate, William Testa, into his presence, and finding he had nothing to urge in defence, but his commission from the Pope, he boldly declared that "neither he, his lords, nor his commons, would any longer consent to submit to the grievous oppressions and extortions which the Pope had laid upon them. Such," said the patriot Prince, "shall no longer be permitted in my dominions; and if you or any other encourage such unlawful deeds, you shall be brought to answer for your acts in the Court of King's Bench. In vain the legate turned his eyes round in the assembly, hoping that some one might be found to support his master's claim. But King and people were alike determined to assert the liberty of their Church and country; and so Master William was forced to retire abashed and discomforted.

Edward I. died in the year 1307. After duly weighing his merits and his failings, I think you will agree with me that he was one of the noblest and wisest princes that ever sat on the throne of England; "right valiant, sage, wise, and hardy,"* as an old writer says. A sincere love for God and his country was at the root of all Edward's acts; and although many of his measures may have seemed to those who lived at the time unjust and oppressive, Edward's far-seeing mind could look forward into the future and see the benefit which would accrue to his country by the wise plan of governing he had adopted.

* Froissart.

CHAPTER XXVI.

EDWARD II.—1307 to 1327.

CHARACTER OF EDWARD II.—HE RECALLS ARCHBISHOP WINCHELSEY—ADVERSITY HAS A GOOD EFFECT ON THE PRIMATE'S CHARACTER—HIS CHARITY AND BLAMELESS LIFE—HE REPROVES THE KING'S FOOLISH PARTIALITY FOR HIS FAVOURITES, AND SO LOSES FAVOUR AT COURT—HIS DEATH—THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS—THEIR DESTRUCTION—CAUSES WHICH LED TO THEIR RUIN—CRUELITIES EXERCISED ON THEM BY THE FRENCH KING—HUMANE POLICY OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH WITH REGARD TO THE TEMPLARS—DISTURBED STATE OF ENGLAND DURING THE REIGN OF EDWARD II.—ARCHBISHOP REYNOLDS—EARLY FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN HIM AND THE KING—EDWARD'S UNWORTHY CONDUCT—HIS UNPOPULARITY—TRIAL OF ADAM ORLTON, BISHOP OF HEREFORD, IN THE KING'S COURT—FAILURE OF THE KING'S SCHEME—ARCHBISHOP REYNOLDS SIDES WITH THE QUEEN—STAPLETON, BISHOP OF EXETER—HIS LOYAL CONDUCT AND VIOLENT DEATH—RUIN OF THE KING'S CAUSE—HE IS SEIZED AND IMPRISONED—THE PRIMATE'S CONDUCT AND SPEECH—EDWARD IS COMPELLED TO ABDICATE IN FAVOUR OF HIS SON—HIS BARBAROUS MURDER IN BERKELEY CASTLE—REMORSE AND GRIEF OF ARCHBISHOP REYNOLDS—HIS DEATH AND CHARACTER.

It is a singular fact that the wisest and best men often have the most unworthy children. It was so with Edward I. Perhaps no two characters could be more entirely unlike than the brave prince who subdued Wales and Scotland, and successfully resisted the encroachments of the Pope, and his weak unworthy son. An old writer justly remarks that "Edward II. resembled nothing to his father, either in wit or in prowess."* He appears to have had no character or will of his own; allowing himself to be entirely governed by false and foolish favourites, who flattered his vanity and encouraged him in habits of prodigality and self-indulgence.

Edward's first act on coming to the throne was to recall Archbishop Winchelsey. After his ignominious retreat from England, the outlawed Primate had appealed to the Pope to redress his grievances. But where he most looked for protection he found nothing but contempt, and so was forced to retire crestfallen from the Papal Court. Winchelsey had experienced a great and sudden reverse of fortune, and it was not without its effect on his character. During his exile he had time to review his former unwise and foolish conduct, and he returned to England an altered man. Though Winchelsey had committed many grave errors in his public capacity, it is only just to state that in private life his conduct was most exemplary. His charity was unbounded. We are told that it was *his custom to relieve at his palace, twice every week, three*

* Froissart.

or four thousand poor people. Not content with merely bestowing alms through others, he wisely inquired himself into cases of distress, generously giving either food, clothing, or money, where it was needed. Winchelsey himself was fond of learning, and did wisely in encouraging it in others. The preferments in his gift were bestowed for the most part only on the learned. Although he owed his recall to the King, Winchelsey's sense of duty would not permit him to sanction any of Edward's foolish and sinful acts. He boldly reproached the King for allowing himself to be led away by his unworthy favourite, Piers Gaveston, and actually succeeded in getting an Act of Parliament passed, by which the Spencers, and other court flatterers, were banished the kingdom. By this popular act the once unpopular Primate gained the confidence of the nation. A truly great-minded man will respect the counsellor who has the courage to point out his failings; but Edward lacked the good sense to perceive that it would be to his own advantage to listen to the Archbishop's wise advice, and Winchelsey was soon out of favour at court. He further irritated the King by refusing to allow him to relax some of the Church laws which had been passed during his father's reign. It was Edward's custom to appoint unprincipled men for his chaplains, and then load them with all sorts of church preferment. It was against such abuses that Winchelsey boldly raised his voice. Unfortunately, his influence over the King lasted but a brief space. He was now an old man. Towards the close of his life he retired to his country retreat at Otford, in Kent, where he spent the greater part of his time, and died in the year 1313, respected and beloved for his deeds of kindness and charity.

I must now tell you about the destruction of the Knights Templars, who you may remember were a half military half religious order, established during the Crusades to protect the Christian pilgrims who flocked to the Holy City. After the fall of Jerusalem, the Templars were scattered about among the countries of Europe, and being a very popular body of men, their influence and wealth rapidly increased; but, like the monasteries, a long period of unclouded prosperity was the cause of their ruin. At this time the self-indulgence, sensuality, and arrogance of these knights had reached such a point that the people had ceased either to respect or to honour them, and when ruin hung over their heads, few cared to avoid it. People *began to forget* the services the Knights Templars had once *rendered to the Christian cause*, and now that they were no *longer needed*, their destruction was easy. The Templars

looked in vain for sympathy either from the monks or nobles. Both parties regarded these warrior-clergy with secret jealousy and ill will. But as long as they could claim the powerful support of the Pope, they could defy their enemies. Now, however, this last and only prop was withdrawn; both King and Pope determined on their destruction. Without doubt, these unfortunate men had committed many and grievous sins, but the heavy charges now brought against them were, for the most part, unfounded. We shrink with horror and disgust from the account of the detestable cruelties exercised on these defenceless men by Philip of France, whose sole aim was to seize the wealth they had accumulated, although he basely pretended that zeal for Christ's religion was his only motive. It is a relief to find that in England, although the Templars were suppressed, they were for the most part spared the heathenish cruelties practised on them by the French. Although the English King received a peremptory order from the Pope to punish the Templars in the same inhuman manner, some of the bishops nobly interfered in their behalf and gained for them, at all events, a fair trial. To the lasting praise of Archbishop Winchelsey, he joined heartily in this good and liberal work; and although the Knights Templars as a body were no longer allowed to exist in England, the different members of the Order were permitted to retire to the monasteries and end their days in peace.

The history of our Church during the reign of Edward II. is involved in a good deal of obscurity, and I fear I shall have some trouble in making the subject at all interesting to you. Like the reign of King Stephen, it was a period of misery and warfare. The country was divided into two factions; the one siding with the faithless Queen Consort Isabella, the other remaining loyal to the unfortunate King. One of the pleasantest and most profitable ways of studying history is to dwell on the lives of those men who stand prominently forward from among the crowd; and therefore I think I cannot do better at this period than tell you about one or two prelates who took an active part in these sad events. After the death of Archbishop Winchelsey, King Edward succeeded in appointing Walter Reynolds to the vacant primacy. This man, although only the son of a baker at Windsor, had risen step by step until he was chosen by Edward I. tutor to the Prince, his son. When Edward II. ascended the throne, his affection for his old tutor was still strong, and he loaded him with preferments. By the *death of Winchelsey*, the highest post in the kingdom became *vacant*, and the King appointed Reynolds to it. There is some

doubt whether Edward would have succeeded in gaining his point had not Pope Clement sided with him.

In the year 1320, the discontented barons and people rose in arms against the King. We must own that they did not do so without great provocation. The money which the nation had willingly granted to Edward was wasted either on unworthy favourites or squandered on his own foolish and sinful pleasures. The weak King had neither the will nor the good sense to alter his course, and the result was that he estranged from him the hearts of his people and the affection of his Queen. You will not be surprised to hear, however, that when the war first broke out, the Primate sided with the King, his former pupil; soon, however, a circumstance arose which tended to weaken, and in the end to destroy their friendship. Adam Orlton, Bishop of Hereford, a man utterly unworthy of his sacred calling, was accused by the King of high treason. It was proved beyond all doubt, that he had aided and abetted the enemies of the crown. Edward boldly determined to try the offending Prelate in his own Court of King's Bench. Such a thing had never been heard of since the time of St. Augustine. It is true Henry II. had attempted to pass a law by which refractory clergy could be tried in a lay court; but his attempt had signally failed, and now the principle for which Archbishop Becket had lived and died was about to be overthrown. Archbishop Reynolds was determined to follow in the steps of his great predecessor, and to struggle for a principle which he considered would deeply affect the well-being of the Church. And although he, together with the rest of the prelates, believed Orlton to be guilty, they all determined to join together to resist his trial in any but an ecclesiastical court. A prompt and resolute scheme was secretly planned by the Archbishop. The day arrived. The offending Prelate stood friendless and alone in the great Hall at Westminster, to answer before an assembly of laymen the charges brought against him. Suddenly the proceedings were interrupted. The large door of the Hall was thrown wide open, and in marched the Primate together with the whole of the Bishops of England and Ireland, arrayed in full pontificals and bearing their crosses aloft. The Prelates gained the victory; and Bishop Orlton was carried back in triumph to his house. The King was greatly enraged. He never forgot nor forgave the insult offered to his authority; nor could the Prelates ever pardon in him so gross a violation of *their liberties*. The Bishop of Hereford henceforth became his *sworn and bitter* opponent. He was now the chief adviser of *the Queen*, who soon openly appeared in arms against her un-

fortunate husband. We are not surprised that Adam Orlton could thus have acted, but the conduct of Archbishop Reynolds is altogether inexplicable. For some reason or other, unknown to us now, he deserted his former friend and sovereign in his extremity, and joined with the disaffected Queen and barons. We are startled at such gross ingratitude; but we have now no means of passing a fair judgment on his conduct. It is to be feared, however, that he thought more of his own safety than of fearlessly doing his duty, and, like many now, had not the courage to stand by a falling cause. That Edward had at this time estranged nearly all his former friends from him, is sufficient proof, that in many ways he had acted unworthily. Few now ventured to support him. One man, at least, nobly stood by the forlorn King, and sacrificed his life rather than forsake his sovereign in his extremity. A man who can thus stand firmly by a ruined and hopeless cause is to be respected for his devotion and bravery. Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter, had been appointed by Edward Governor of the City of London. The Queen who had been pushing her victories, now appeared before the gates of the capital, and demanded instant admittance. The Bishop, firm in his loyalty, ordered the Londoners to close their gates, and stand upon their defence. But treachery was nigh at hand. The alarming intelligence reached the Bishop that the citizens, who were secretly in favour of the Queen, had risen against him in open rebellion, and with shouts and yells were approaching the palace. Death was before him. But good men are generally brave. They can face danger without shrinking; and though entreated by his friends to remain in concealment, Bishop Stapleton boldly rode forth among the rebels, hoping that his venerable appearance and earnest words might avail to stay the tumult. But all was in vain. The infuriated mob rushed upon their unarmed and defenceless victim, and dragging him along the streets with brutal violence, at length cut off his head. The Bishop died as he had lived, a brave Christian man. He was greatly respected for his piety and learning; and Queen Isabella, in order to allay the public indignation caused by his barbarous murder, ordered his body to be decently interred in his own cathedral at Exeter.

In the meantime, the wretched King, hunted from one place to another by his enemies, was at length seized, and conveyed prisoner to Kenilworth Castle; from whence he was removed to Berkeley Castle, in Gloucestershire. From this dismal fortress the unhappy monarch never came forth. In the year 1327 a *Parliament* was summoned at Westminster Hall. The *Archbishop* and the rest of the prelates were present. It was

there unanimously agreed that the young prince Edward should be crowned King of England, and his father deposed. Then the Archbishop rose and addressed the assembly. The affection he once felt for his old pupil and sovereign, who had bestowed on him so many benefits, had all vanished now, like a morning vapour. He told the people that the war in which they had engaged was a true and lawful one. He exhorted them to pray for their new Prince, and, hoping to stifle any scruples of conscience either he or the nobles may have felt with regard to their treatment of the King, he exclaimed, "Surely the voice of the people is the voice of God!" The conduct of this weak and treacherous Primate is worthy of contempt. His very words were false in principle; although doubtless to the excited minds of his hearers they seemed to convey a grand truth. It is true that God orders and disposes every event, and can mould men's minds as the potter does his clay; but none can deny that at the time of a great revolution, the mass of the people are more frequently guided by their own headstrong passions than by obedience to God's will; and therefore "the voice of the people" is not always the "voice of God," but sometimes the voice of Satan transformed into an angel of light. A man like Walter Reynolds, who could desert a friend and benefactor in his trouble, richly deserves, what he usually gets, namely, the contempt of both parties.

At the conclusion of the proceedings at Westminster, the archbishops and those of the prelates who were present, were forced by the Londoners to go to Guildhall, and there swear to defend the liberties of the city. But as the Primate retired from the Hall, he was assaulted, maltreated, and trampled upon by the fickle mob outside, and was thankful to escape with his life.* Whatever we may think of the weak unprincipled monarch, who was afterwards so barbarously murdered, the conduct of his false and perfidious tutor deserves nothing but contempt. The base and cowardly Orlton, Bishop of Hereford, together with several others of the conspirators, fearful lest a few loyal hearts might still rally round their ruined sovereign, sent down to Berkeley Castle a message which none could mistake. The same night King Edward was foully murdered, in a manner too dreadful to describe. We can scarcely believe that a Bishop, one who had sworn to be a follower of the God of peace, could have been guilty of a crime so horrible. But remember, our Lord himself tells us there must ever be

* *This remark will remind those who have read modern history, of the great French revolution of 1789, which wellnigh involved the whole nation, poor as well as rich, in utter destruction.*

tares among the wheat. You have read of more good prelates than bad ones, and beware of condemning, as some do, a whole class of men as unworthy because some fail to do their duty. I would have you rather imbibe the spirit of the following excellent words which were uttered by one of our ancestors in the reign of Henry III. : "Amongst the angels the Lord found a rebel, amongst the seven deacons a deviator from the right path, and amongst the Apostles a traitor. God forbid, that the sin of one or of a few should redound to the disgrace of such a numerous community !"*

Archbishop Reynolds must have been overwhelmed with grief and remorse when the news of the King's barbarous murder reached him. In that bitter moment all Edward's faults were doubtless forgotten, while the thought of his kindliness, amiability, and affection must have added tenfold to the Primate's sorrow and compunction. Nor is this sad story of woe and ingratitude without a moral for us. May it ever be our aim to live in charity with others, and to act towards them with sincerity and love. For if, when an erring brother falls away, we treat him with injustice, scorn, and deception, how unbearable will be our sorrow and remorse, should a sudden death place it beyond our power to ask his forgiveness! A heavier punishment than this God could not send. Possibly the sudden shock hastened the aged Primate's end; for a few months after his sovereign's murder he was called to his last account. A modern writer, in few words, ably sums up the Archbishop's character : "Had the times been undisturbed, he might have left a fair character behind him; but when put to the test, his irresolution was soon discovered. He seems to have had an inclination for honesty and honour, but wanted courage to maintain it. Weakness frightened him out of his loyalty, and dragged him through the lengths of the revolution. Thus we see that virtue without fortitude is worth little, and it is impossible for a coward to be an honest man."†

* Matthew Paris, vol. ii., p. 276.

† Collier, vol. iii., p. 58.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE REIGN OF EDWARD III. APPROACHES THE PERIOD OF THE GREAT REFORMATION IN THE CHURCH—GRADUAL INCREASE IN THE FEELING WHICH LED TO THIS EVENT—REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE CHURCH AT THIS TIME—REASONS WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT THE POPE'S CLAIM TO UNIVERSAL SUPREMACY—ERRORS WHICH THE CHURCH OF ROME GRADUALLY INTRODUCED, AND MADE BINDING ON ALL CHRISTIANS; WHICH ERRORS SPRANG FROM CUSTOMS SCRIPTURAL AND GOOD IN THEMSELVES—OBSERVANCE OF HOLY DAYS—ABUSE OF THE GOOD CUSTOM—SAINT WORSHIP AND RELICS—SOURCE OF WEALTH TO THE ROMAN SEE—FASTING AND PENANCE—ABUSE OF THE SYSTEM—INDULGENCES—ORIGINAL PURITY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME—CONCLUSION.

IN many respects the reign of Edward III. is a most important one in the history of our Church. The latter portion of it stands, as it were, on the very threshold of that mighty reform, which shook the religious faith of our country to its very foundation. I allude to the great Reformation of the Church which reached its climax in the reign of Henry VIII. As we have still many reigns to pass through before we reach that period, you may think that I need not have alluded so soon to the subject. But the sky darkened and the clouds gathered long before the storm burst; and the whole nation was longing for, and tending towards a reform in the Church, years before it actually took place. Great changes or revolutions seldom come suddenly. It is true that the crowning event itself may come upon the country like a thunderbolt, but the feeling that caused it is often fermenting in the land, it may be for centuries beforehand. I have already told you that at different periods the Church of Rome had put forth doctrines and laws which were clearly contrary to God's Word, and to the faith of the early Christian Church. And in order to enforce these doctrines, and make them binding on all Churches, the Bishops of Rome had gradually, but surely, established a right to universal sovereignty over the whole Christian Church. We have seen in free England how the claim was received, and with what a brave burst of patriotic feeling our countrymen rejected the Pope's unlawful pretensions. But slowly, yet surely, as the ages passed, the Bishop of Rome strengthened rather than relaxed his hold on the freedom of our Church; until at the great Reformation we boldly asserted that liberty which had been our right from the day that Christ's name was first preached on the shores of Britain. I have shown you that the weakness of many of our *Kings tended* in no small degree to strengthen the Pope's *authority in England*. But there were other circumstances over

which mortal man could have had no control, which led to the same result. The King's prelates and people of England, although they might in principle object to the Pope's claim as universal Bishop, found that in all difficulties an appeal to the Court of Rome for a final decision was most convenient, nay, often necessary. Nor can we wonder at this. The people of England were but carried away by that swift tide of opinion which bore all the world before it. We, in these days, imagine that we have reached the firm bank of the stream, and therefore can afford to look back and ridicule our struggling ancestors, and wonder at their folly; forgetting that had we lived then, we also must have been carried away by the relentless torrent.

Before we pass, step by step, through the events which led to the great Reformation in England, I must bring before you, as briefly as possible, what it was that really needed reform. The doctrines upheld by the Roman Church were so slowly, so gradually, so silently insinuated into the faith of the Church, that it was only men of singular penetration, and whose minds were altogether in advance of their age, that could discover and point them out. But that such men were not wanting to our country at rare intervals, I have already shown you. I will now explain what these doctrines were against which many true-hearted Englishmen soon prepared to raise their voices.

It is to be observed that almost every religious error or false doctrine springs from something really good and true of itself, which has become abused or exaggerated. This remark especially applies to the errors of the Church of Rome. The English Church now orders us to observe or keep holy certain days in commemoration of those blessed Apostles and martyrs whose works of labour and love we read of in the Bible. And we have good authority, too, for such a custom. In the early Church, soon after the time of the Apostles, when religious faith had been but little corrupted, it was the custom of Christians to set apart certain days in remembrance of those holy Apostles and martyrs who had died for the faith. On the appointed day, numbers flocked to the burial-place of the Christian saint, and knelt in devout prayer at his tomb, or stood silently meditating on his brave endurance and devotion to the Saviour. Such exercises as these could not fail to raise and elevate the minds of the early Christians; and there is no doubt that we in these days may derive infinite comfort and benefit by worshipping God in our churches on the Saints' Days, if we do but go in a humble and reverent spirit. For while our services *teach us to try and imitate* these holy men in their zeal, their *devotion, and their patient endurance*, they lead us also to adore

and worship the Master, in whose strength they triumphed. You will be surprised to hear that a custom so true and scriptural in itself could ever have led to anything but good. But, unhappily, in the course of centuries, it became so abused, as to be a fruitful source of mischief to the Church. At first it was only the best men, such as Apostles and martyrs, whose memories were thus honoured. But as years passed on, numbers of others found places in the calendar of Saints who had little right even to be called by that sacred name. It soon, however, became the policy of the Papal Court to encourage a still worse abuse of the system, which also sprang from a principle natural and good in itself. As the martyr himself was so much honoured, you can well imagine that all that belonged to him was revered and preserved. In the case of Archbishop Becket, every particle of clothing, however worthless in itself, was carefully put aside, while the more precious bones were reverently placed in a shrine, the magnificence of which I have described to you. All this was perfectly natural. Human feelings are the same in all ages, although the objects on which we bestow our reverence may vary. The birthday of a beloved friend is set apart by us as a day of rejoicing; and if that friend be taken from us, with what affection do we treasure up all that belonged to him! while the anniversary of his death, as it comes round, is observed by us with loving reverence. Why then, I say, should we withhold from an exalted Apostle or a great public benefactor that respect and honour we willingly pay to the memory of any private friend? or regard with suspicion, as many do, a custom so excellent and scriptural, merely because the Roman Church has abused it? That it was abused every honest-minded man must own. I have already remarked that it was natural that the relics of the holy should be honoured and reverently interred, and that people who visited their burial-places should find comfort and help in kneeling in prayer to God at their shrines. But the idea soon prevailed that God would be more likely to listen to the devout prayers of His people, if offered through the saint, who thus became, as it was supposed, a mediator between sinful man and his offended God; although we are told in Holy Scripture that "there is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." I do not say that our Saviour's mediation was altogether overlooked; but the extreme reverence and even devotion which was paid to His saints, tended after a time to eclipse the Divine merits, *making Christ's intercession of no more value than the intercession of a holy man.* The step from a lesser to a greater evil *was easy*; and when prayers were actually addressed to the

departed saint himself, and even to his image or relics, it became a species of idolatry, which must have been most displeasing to Him who has said, "Thou shalt not set up any image to bow down to it, for I am the Lord your God."

The Popes, supported by the friars, not only silently sanctioned this abuse, but encouraged it in every possible way. Their reason for so doing was clear. We have seen with what greedy rapacity the Pontiffs seized on the revenues of the Church, and this new and increasing veneration for relics became far too important a source of wealth to be relinquished. The friars, who at first possessed unbounded influence over the minds of the people, impressed them with the idea that a journey to the shrine of any saint was a duty they owed to God. They were further told that miracles of healing could be wrought at these holy spots, and that the Pope had power from God to grant indulgences or freedom from purgatorial pains to those who made these religious pilgrimages.* You can therefore well imagine with what ardour the ignorant would flock to these sacred shrines, and with grateful hearts present their willing offerings. In course of time these offerings amounted to an enormous sum, a great part of which was claimed by the Pope, while the remainder went to swell the revenues of the Church.

I must now say a few words about the practice of fasting and penance, both of which good customs became sadly abused in the Roman Church. No one, who has carefully read his Bible, or studied the history of the early Church, can for a moment doubt that the habit of fasting, or denying ourselves certain indulgences, is both scriptural and primitive. Our Blessed Lord, who set us an example that we should follow in his steps, fasted forty days and forty nights; not that He, who was all-perfect, needed the discipline Himself, but that He might set His seal to a practice which He considered necessary to fallen and sinful man. I would further add that Christ not only fasted Himself, but has left us rules for the proper observance of this custom; placing the duty of fasting on a par with that of prayer, which all Christians own to be necessary. As long as the world endures, these words of Saint Matthew will not only sanction, but make binding on all Christ's followers, the duties of prayer and self-denial. "When ye pray," says our Lord, "use not vain repetitions; when ye *fast*, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance."† Churches, and people also, may differ

* One is glad to find, however, that so late as the reign of Henry III., indulgences were not sanctioned by the canons of our church.—Collier, vol. ii. p. 564.

† *St. Matthew vi. 7-16.*

as to the manner in which this duty is to be performed, but that it is a duty, these words sufficiently prove. Do we need instances from the Old Testament to support this argument? The names of Moses, David, Elijah, Nehemiah, and Daniel, leave us without a doubt that the practice of fasting is pleasing to God. Happily our Church now has learnt to *use* this sacred ordinance without abusing it. In one of her Lenten Collects she thus enjoins us to follow our Lord's example, that we may become more like Him : "O Lord, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights, give us grace to use such abstinence, that our flesh being subdued to the spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness to Thy honour and glory."*

There can be no doubt that acts of self-denial teach us to think less of earthly ease and comfort. In these days of luxury and self-indulgence, we are but too prone to set a high value on the good things of this life, and therefore it is well for us to learn sometimes to do without them. As a help to religious devotion, fasting ever has been and ever will be most valuable. But when once we pride ourselves on our fasting, or do it hypocritically, indulging in as great or greater delights than those from which we abstain ; or when, as our homily says, "we fast with this persuasion of mind, that our fasting and our good works can make us perfect and just men, and finally bring us to heaven, thus detracting from the merits of Christ's death," then our fasting becomes a snare instead of a help.

In the Primitive Church those who had committed very grievous sins were enjoined to perform certain acts of penance ; that is, they were required to make confession of their sins in the house of God, in the presence of the congregation. After this, those who expressed contrition for their sins were not admitted to the Holy Communion till they had undergone a term of penance. The duration of the term varied according to the magnitude of the offence, and the penitence or impenitence of the offender. For the heavier crimes, ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty years, or even the whole of a life, were not thought too long. But the Bishop had power to moderate and abridge the period. During the term of their penance, penitents were to abstain from all feasting and innocent amusements, and to show liberality to the poor ; and at certain periods, more particularly in Lent, they were obliged to appear in God's house, clothed in sackcloth, with ashes on their heads, making public confession of their sins. *Doubtless*, such acts of humiliation often did good to the person *who had sinned* ; while the fact that he was debarred for a time

* Collect for the first Sunday in Lent.

from the Holy Communion, reminded both culprit and people of the hatefulness of sin in God's sight. This useful practice of public penance has been discontinued in our Church; although in the Commination service, which you remember is read in God's house on Ash Wednesday, the hope is entertained "that the said discipline may be again restored." The opening exhortation of this same service so well confirms what I have been saying, that I cannot do better than quote it. "Brethren, in the Primitive Church there was a godly discipline, that at the beginning of Lent, such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others, admonished by their example, might be the more afraid to offend."* The great object of the primitive discipline was the restoration of the penitent to God's favour. As a father punisheth his child in love, so the Church punished her rebellious children, in order that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord. But let us compare this discipline with that which Innocent III. inflicted on King John and the English nation, and we shall see even at that time how greatly the Church of Rome had abused the ancient discipline. You may remember how in that terrible interdict the innocent people endured the same punishment as their worthless sovereign. But as the period of the Reformation was drawing on, the system became gradually more and more corrupt. The Pope then behaved in such a manner as to render acts of penance and mortification in many cases unnecessary. Those who had committed gross sins could obtain pardon from the Roman Pontiff by paying a certain sum of money, so that the discipline of public penance often became disused. Without it, the wrath of a justly offended God might be appeased, and pardon obtained by the payment of a paltry sum of money. This subject brings forcibly before our mind the fervent words of the Apostle Peter, who sternly rebuked the sorcerer, Simon, for imagining that the blessed gifts of God's Holy Spirit could be purchased with money. "Thy money," says the Apostle, "perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."†

You can well imagine that vast numbers would gladly avail themselves of so easy a mode of obtaining forgiveness, while

* See Commination Service, in the Prayer Book.

† Acts viii. 20-22.

again and again they would deign to mock the God of all purity by returning to those sins which were so odious in His sight. When I come to the Reformation itself, I shall have occasion again to refer to these subjects, so I hope you will carefully remember all I have said about them. I will only now add a few words in conclusion. Although the Roman Church *was* and *is* certainly in error with regard to these matters, I would have you bear in mind that it was not always so. There was a time when the Church of Rome was as pure and free from corruption as any other branch of the Primitive Church. Let us beware of falling into that false and foolish notion that would confound the doctrines of Rome in early days with her teaching and practice in later times. It was Gregory the Great, that wise and good Bishop of Rome (to whom we in England owe so much), who refused the title of "Pope," or universal Bishop, when it was offered him; nor should we ever forget that he it was who bequeathed to our Church so many beautiful and ancient collects which happily are still preserved in our Book of Common Prayer. Numbers of good and useful rules, too, he gave us, which would do honour to a Christian bishop in any age. Finally, while we condemn the Roman Church for having unduly exaggerated and corrupted the Christian customs of which I have been speaking, let us beware of falling into the equally unscriptural and dangerous extreme of setting too light a value on them; remembering with thankfulness the words of St. James: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Light."* Surely, the good gifts or helps of which I have been speaking, will be of infinite benefit to us, if we *use*, without abusing them.

* St. James i. 17.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EDWARD III.—1327 TO 1335.

EDWARD'S UPRIGHT CONDUCT—AS SOON AS HE ASCENDS THE THRONE, HE PUNISHES THOSE WHO HAD LEAGUED AGAINST HIS FATHER—MORTIMER IS BEHEADED, AND THE QUEEN MOTHER IMPRISONED—TRIAL OF ADAM ORLETON—HIS CUNNING APPEAL TO THE KING—SIMON MEPEHAM, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, MAKES SOME WISE LAWS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH—OBSERVANCE OF HOLY DAYS ENJOINED—DEATH OF MEPEHAM—HIS CHARACTER—THE LORD CHANCELLOR STRATFORD IS MADE ARCHBISHOP BY THE KING—HIS FAVOUR WITH EDWARD—HIS WISE AND ABLE MEASURES FOR THE GOOD OF THE COUNTRY—EDWARD LAYS CLAIM TO THE CROWN OF FRANCE—STRATFORD ENDEAVOURS TO OBTAIN PEACE, AND FAILS—HE RELUCTANTLY SANCTIONS THE WAR—ENTHUSIASM OF EDWARD AND HIS PEOPLE—STRATFORD IS LEFT GOVERNOR OF THE KINGDOM—DIFFICULTIES OF HIS POSITION.

WE must now proceed with our history. Edward III. was scarcely fifteen when he accepted the crown which his unfortunate father had been compelled to resign. His mother, and those who had most influence over his youthful mind, persuaded him to take this step, which they urged would be for the good of the nation. We cannot wonder, therefore, that he soon fell into their scheme; but the dreadful idea that he was accessory to his father's death need not, happily, be entertained. Indeed, all the after acts of this great prince disprove the fact that when a boy of tender years he could have been guilty of a crime so heinous. For two or three years Edward was considered too young to reign in his own right; but he soon took the government of the kingdom into his own hands, and proceeded to punish those who had connived at his father's murder. The wicked Mortimer, on whom the unprincipled queen had placed her affections, and who shared the regency with her, was seized by the young King, and beheaded. Nor did he allow the tender affection he had always felt towards his guilty mother to interfere with his duty. The Queen was placed by his orders in close confinement, but permitted to retain most of the luxuries and comforts befitting her high rank. By this upright and manly act, Edward showed his people that although he considered it his duty to respect the Queen as his mother, he could not approve of nor sanction her public conduct. His next act was to take proceedings against the worthless prelate, Adam Orleton. Unfortunately, however, in the first instance, the law allowed the offender to escape, although it is evident that the King intended he should be punished. The accusations brought against him were just and true. It was urged that he had styled the late King a tyrant in his sermons, and had persuaded the people

to depose and imprison him. That he had further constrained the Queen, Isabella, to desert her unfortunate husband, and that he had sanctioned, nay, it was secretly whispered, had planned the late King's murder. Orleton's cause was a weak one, but he knew well how to seek for aid. With consummate cunning he thus addressed the King: "My lord the King, with all due respect unto your Majesty, I, Adam, a humble minister and member of the Church of God, and a consecrated bishop, though unworthy, neither can nor ought to answer unto so hard questions without the connivance and consent of my lord Archbishop of Canterbury, my immediate judge, under the Pope, and without the consent of other bishops, who are my peers."* Always jealous for their rights, this appeal was not lost upon the clergy, although they despised the author of it; and when Edward for the second time attempted to judge the offending bishop in his own Court of King's Bench, the prelates interfered and procured Orleton's release. Edward, however, determined to persevere, and at length found the Bishop guilty. His property was seized, and he was banished the kingdom. We are surprised, however, to find that some years afterwards Adam Orleton returned, and was received into the King's favour. Throughout the whole affair Edward had acted with prudence and justice; and therefore we must needs conclude that the Bishop would never have been received into favour had he not repented of his evil deeds, and become an altered character. Let us hope that it was so; for when two opinions are placed before us, we shall do well to choose the most charitable of them. Edward III., like his grandfather, was a clever statesman and a brave warrior. You can read all about his wars with Scotland and France in the history of England. I need not, therefore, enter fully upon these subjects; I shall have to allude to them by-and-by; but for the present we will confine ourselves to the affairs of the Church.

At this time Simon Mepeham was Archbishop of Canterbury. He was a mild and gentle-spirited man, and shrunk from interfering with public matters. But though he cared little for politics, he threw himself with vigour into his pastoral work, doing his utmost to correct the numerous abuses which had crept into the Church. At a large council held by him about the year 1330, he exhorted the prelates "to show a zeal for the Lord their God, and to endeavour to make an example of those who, though honoured by the name of Christians, yet contradicted their profession by their damned works;" and so *he continued*, in the quaint yet expressive language of the time,

* Fuller's Church History, vol. i. page 415.

as "to root out by the sword of the spirit, and the hoe of ecclesiastical discipline, all hurtful vices, and graft virtue and reform manners, so that evil appetites may not exceed the bounds of honesty; but that the Christian profession may be advanced with a salutary increase." I must also mention another synod held by the Archbishop in the year 1332, when he made some wise laws for the government of the Church. They are important as showing us the enlightened view which good and unbigoted men, like Mepeham, could take of the growing corruption of the times. He acknowledged the evil, and strove to remedy it. Speaking of the observance of the holy days, the Archbishop bitterly complains of their abuse in the following words. "The institution of Holy Days," he says, "which were particularly designed for the honour of God, are now perverted to foreign and profane uses, made a convenience for trade and works of dishonesty, and abused to luxury and licentiousness. Instead of fasting upon the vigils, frequenting the church, and keeping the festivals with sobriety and devotion, the people run out to all excesses of riot, as if those days had given them a dispensation from conscience and regularity." Not content with thus exposing the evil, the Archbishop set himself in earnest to correct it. With the help of his prelates, he drew up a rubric of the principal holy days, together with the manner in which they ought to be observed. At the risk of wearying you, I have made a list of these chief festivals, that you may see how, with some few exceptions, they are the same which our Church orders us to observe now. First of all comes Christmas Day; then St. Stephen's Day, St. John's, the Holy Innocents, St. Thomas of Canterbury, the Circumcision, the Epiphany, the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, St. Matthias, the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, Easter, with the three following days; St. Mark the Evangelist, St. Philip and St. James, Invention of Holy Cross, Our Lord's Ascension, Whitsuntide, with the three following days; St. John Baptist, St. Peter and St. Paul, Translation of St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Mary Magdalene, St. James the Apostle, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, St. Lawrence, St. Bartholomew, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, Exaltation of Holy Cross, St. Matthew the Apostle, St. Michael, St. Luke the Evangelist, the Apostles St. Simon and St. Jude, All Saints, St. Andrew, St. Nicholas, Conception of the Blessed Virgin, St. Thomas the Apostle. I have already told you that in olden times Thomas à Becket ranked with the chief saints in England, therefore you will not be surprised to find his *name in the list of holy days*. You will observe, also, that the *Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, her Nativity and Conception,*

find a place among these high festivals. This proves to us that the honour paid to her, and which she justly merited in common with the most exalted saints, was nevertheless soon to overstep its due bounds. The last of the two festivals in honour of the Blessed Virgin, together with St. Nicholas Day, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Lawrence Day, and the days held in honour of the Cross, are still retained in our Calendar, though they do not find a place among those chief festivals which our Church orders us to observe. Upon these holy days, says Mepeham, the people are enjoined to forbear working, to come to church, to be present at all the parts of divine service, to join in the public devotions for the quick and dead ; and, in short, to spend the time in such a religious manner, that both themselves and others may be qualified for the mediation of those saints in honour of whom the festivals are kept.* It was also enjoined that Good Friday should be strictly observed, and on that holy day all servile work was forbidden. We may think such strict rules as these unnecessary, and that people would have served God better by following their usual worldly occupations. But surely, a day snatched sometimes from the world's cares and pleasures, and spent in God's house, has been in all ages a time of hallowed peace and joy to those who worship "in spirit and in truth." It would be well for our country in these days, had we, as a nation, a little more of our forefathers' reverence for the ordinances of religion ; then, possibly, the startling amount of coldness, infidelity, and sin that, all must own, is present with us now, might, by God's grace, be lessened, and His holy name and sacraments receive more regard and decent honour.

Simon Mepeham only held the Archbishopric for five years. He was scarcely equal to the stirring times in which he lived, which required the Primate to be an active statesman as well as an earnest divine. He died in the year 1333, having retired, to end his days in peace, to one of his manors in Sussex.

Among the men who at this time stood most high in the King's favour, was John Stratford, Bishop of Winchester. Edward had already conferred on him the office of Lord Chancellor, and now that the Primacy was vacant, he determined to bestow that exalted post on his favourite. From all accounts, Stratford was well worthy of the confidence which his royal master reposed in him. A man of strict integrity and consummate wisdom, Archbishop Stratford stands foremost in the ranks of our English statesmen. He was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, a name familiar to all Englishmen as the birth-place of our poet Shakespeare. Every one has heard of the

* Collier, vol. iii. p. 62.

great poet ; but few know or appreciate the able statesman who, at the dawn of the fourteenth century, first saw the light at this obscure country town.

When Edward III. came to the throne, the state of the country was most deplorable. Lawlessness and irreligion abounded. The civil wars had unsettled men's minds, and many preferred gaining a livelihood by robbery and violence rather than by honest toil. Edward set himself in earnest to remedy the evil ; and as Stratford was his chief counsellor, we must, in justice, attribute to him most of the young King's wise acts. It is evident that the Lord Chancellor had already won the esteem and confidence of his fellow-countrymen : when Edward brought him forward, all were unanimous in accepting him as their Primate. A learned man and a clever statesman, Stratford was quite equal to the stirring times in which he lived ; and like most men who try to do their duty consistently and boldly, he met with much opposition and odium. Let us try and take a fair unbiassed view of his position, bearing in mind the character of the age in which he lived, and not judging of his conduct solely by the light of our own time.

In the year 1335, Edward I. laid claim to the crown of France. Most of our modern histories condemn, without hesitation, this act of Edward's. His conduct certainly appears at first sight most unjust ; but all his subjects, including the upright Archbishop, supported him in his claim, it being generally believed that Edward had a fair right to the crown of France, as his mother, Isabella, was sole heiress and sister to the late King of France, Charles. With regard to Stratford, we must own that, at first sight, his conduct is perplexing. Although he fully admitted Edward's claim, it is evident that he disliked the war, from the steps he took to prevent it. An old writer tells us, in quaint language, how Stratford crossed the seas in company with the Bishop of Durham, "In order to treat of peace, if by any good means the two Kings might be made friends ; but as it appeared, their travail was in vain ; for although they abode together some time on the frontier, doing their best endeavour, yet their travail nothing availed."* As we go a little deeper into the subject, however, I shall hope to reconcile the apparent inconsistency of this great man's acts. While negotiations were still pending, the matter was decided by Philip of France invading Gascony, and making a piratical attack on some of the English seaports. Edward's course was now plain. He *at once* determined to prosecute the war with *all the vigour and despatch* imaginable. But before starting on

* Holinshed.

his expedition, Edward summoned a Parliament. The war was highly popular. Both clergy and laity granted their sovereign liberal supplies of money; while the Archbishop consented to hold himself responsible for a large sum out of his own income, although he disapproved of actual war. Full of confidence in Stratford's loyalty and ability, King Edward left the government of England entirely in his hands, and, with a light heart, sailed with a numerous and valiant army from the shores of Britain.

But Stratford's mind was ill at ease. His position was most difficult and perplexing. He certainly regarded the King's claim as just, and had Edward been satisfied with simply negotiating for the Crown, Stratford was ready and willing to assist him. But a bloody war he had never sanctioned. Indeed, rather than involve the nation in it, he would have had the King at once resign all claim to the French throne. But when once the spark was ignited, it was no easy matter to quench the flame. In these days it is difficult to conceive the ardour with which Englishmen threw themselves into a French war. The young King, full of energy and daring courage, longed to show his people that he was not unworthy of the confidence placed in him. So, when he found that his staid friend and monitor, Stratford, stood aloof from the general enthusiasm, and coldly sanctioned what he could not avert, Edward began to feel uneasy and dissatisfied with the Primate. Without knowing exactly why, he felt conscious that his haughty spirit was chafed, and his ardour damped. Nor was the Archbishop's position a more easy one after the King had departed. The man who stands at the head of a nation, and yet, for conscience sake, is opposed to its most darling projects, is not to be envied. Stratford was now looked upon with suspicion and distrust, and his popularity waned. But a noble and vigorous mind is equal to any emergency, and only gains strength by adversity and opposition. As the clouds gathered, and the sky lowered, Stratford's spirit rose, and with an honest heart he determined to state firmly and openly what he believed to be the truth.

CHAPTER XXIX.

EDWARD III. *continued.*—1335 to 1343.

UNFORTUNATE OPENING OF THE WAR WITH FRANCE—EDWARD'S RESOURCES BEING EXHAUSTED, HE DEMANDS A FURTHER SUPPLY FROM HIS PEOPLE—STRATFORD OFFENDS THE KING BY REFUSING ANY LONGER TO COUNTENANCE THE WAR—EDWARD SUDDENLY RETURNS HOME—THE ARCHBISHOP ACCUSED OF HIGH TREASON—HIS MANLY APPEAL TO THE KING—SCENE IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL—THE PEOPLE SYMPATHISE IN THEIR PRIMATE'S MISFORTUNE—INTEGRITY OF STRATFORD—UNSEEMLY FRAY AT THE GATES OF THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE—STRATFORD RESTORED TO FAVOUR—EDWARD GENEROUSLY OWNS HIMSELF TO HAVE BEEN IN THE WRONG—THOMAS BRADWARDINE—HIS SAINTLY CHARACTER—HE ACCOMPANIES THE KING TO THE WAR AS HIS CHAPLAIN—IS BELOVED AND RESPECTED BY THE ARMY—HE PREVAILS ON THE KING TO PARDON STRATFORD—RENEWED OPPRESSIONS OF THE ROMAN CHURCH—PATRIOTIC REMONSTRANCE SENT BY EDWARD AND HIS PEOPLE TO THE COURT OF ROME—POPE CLEMENT TREATS THE MESSENGER WITH CONTEMPT AND ANGER.

ARCHBISHOP STRATFORD may, perhaps, have felt that he had acted the part of a craven, in not having more openly set his face against the war. It was not long, however, before he had the opportunity of expressing his opinion, and we must admire the boldness and honesty with which he did it. Edward's first campaign in France proved most unfortunate. Owing partly to the coldness of his allies, and partly to his own inexperience, little or no advance was made in the war. To add to his other difficulties, the money, with which he had been so liberally supplied, began to fall short, and the intrepid warrior found to his mortification, that all his hopes would be thwarted unless he received another supply from his people at home. Confident of success, he wrote to the Archbishop, demanding as his due a further remittance. But Stratford was now determined openly to resist what he considered a wilful waste of public treasure; and with manly firmness refused any longer to sanction the King's extravagance. We cannot say that his refusal was unreasonable. Had Edward husbanded his resources, and prudently spent the money for the benefit of the country, Stratford, doubtless, would have been the first to assist and uphold him. But it was darkly hinted that a great deal of the public money had been frittered away by unworthy and thoughtless young courtiers; or, what was worse, spent in folly and sin. As a Christian man, and a prelate, Stratford felt it his duty to raise his voice against such things, although he foresaw that by so doing he must incur the heavy displeasure of his sovereign, and the hatred of those idle flatterers who surrounded the royal throne. *Edward was furious.* The campaign had come to a most ig-

nominous end. The proud warrior Prince had become a laughing-stock to the whole of Europe, and his sensitive mind was sorely tried by the ridiculous position in which he was placed. As you may imagine, all the odium fell upon Stratford. Edward, like his noble grandfather, was a fearless soldier; but he lacked his keen sense of justice and clear perception of character. All the Chancellor's labours for the benefit of his country and the honour of the crown were forgotten. Edward's pride was wounded, and his glory on the wane; and without considering that the archbishop had really acted for the good of the nation, he lent a too willing ear to those false friends who had long been jealous of Stratford's influence over him. With a suddenness which astonished every one, Edward appeared in England, and as you may imagine, in no very amiable frame of mind. In a moment of weakness he listened to the evil suggestions of those about him, and accused the primate of holding treasonable correspondence with Philip of France, and in other ways abetting the King's enemies. In short, Stratford was charged with high treason. As a true patriot, he deeply felt this most unjust and false accusation. Fully aware of the danger to which his life was exposed, he sent an earnest letter of remonstrance to Edward, beseeching him to investigate the matter with a fair unbiassed mind. "I do pray your liege," said he, "not to give too light credit unto such as would counsel you to hold in contempt those who have been true and faithful to your cause, lest haply you lose the love and good will of your people. Nevertheless, I would earnestly beg of you to try the matter, so that those in fault may be worthily punished. As for myself, I am ready to be tried by my peers, saving always the state of Holy Church and my order. And I do beseech you not to think evil of me, or of other good men, until the truth be tried. For otherwise should judgment be pronounced without admitting the accused to come to his answer, as well the guiltless as the guilty may be condemned." * This manly appeal had little effect on Edward. He had gone too far to retract; and even had he wished to retire from the contest, he had not sufficient strength of mind to resist those who now urged him forward. But Stratford was not altogether without support. He possessed the usual resources of an ecclesiastic, and he was not slow to avail himself of them. He held a solemn service in Canterbury Cathedral. Arrayed in gorgeous vestments, and followed by a brilliant procession, the Archbishop moved slowly up the aisle to the high altar. Crowds thronged into the sacred edifice, *eager to hear the Primate's defence.* All were interested in the

* Holinshed.

contest; and with that love of justice which in all ages has been the boast of the English nation, the people of Canterbury had already begun to sympathise with their accused and humbled primate. As the tears flowed down his cheeks, and he struggled for utterance, the hearts of those present warmed towards him. A breathless silence reigned through the vast building as Stratford delivered his able defence. With true loyalty, he forbore blaming the King for having so weakly given heed to the false slanders raised against him, but accused himself as the author of all his present troubles. "How different," he exclaimed, "has been my conduct to that of the blessed martyr St. Thomas à Becket. He gave up all the dignities and honours of the state to follow his own holy calling, preferring the mitre to the Chancellor's mace; while I, foolish and misguided man, have gone too far in the business of the commonwealth, neglecting the duties which devolved on me as Primate of England. I have bestowed far too much time and inclination on foreign employments, and so have justly drawn public envy upon me, and am in danger of my life. Henceforth," he vehemently continued, "if God preserve me, I solemnly swear to be more diligent in the government of my province, and will disentangle myself from public affairs." At the conclusion of this address, he solemnly excommunicated all those who had unjustly accused him to the King. It was altogether a masterly stroke of Stratford's; for although this excommunication only added to the rancour of the Primate's enemies, their renewed malice tended to open the King's eyes, and he began to doubt whether there was not a good deal of private feeling concealed under their apparent concern for his honour. But Stratford's chief strength lay in the fact, that like Archbishop Becket, he had enlisted the sympathies of the people in his cause. His wrongs had been made public. They were just, and so in the end he triumphed. In fervent words he had compared his own position with that of the sainted and admired Thomas à Becket; and the magic of that name had awakened for Stratford and his cause a thrill of sympathetic feeling from one end of England to the other. Why should we condemn the Primate for this wise stroke of policy? for what would be sin in a man justly accused of deceitful and unpatriotic conduct, is only prudent self-defence in one who has been unjustly condemned. I should weary you were I to enter upon the long correspondence which now ensued between the King and the Primate. I will only add, that in my opinion, the Archbishop had by far the best of the argument; for the accusations urged against him were evidently prompted not *by the King himself, but by the animosity of Stratford's enemies.*

The Archbishop, now feeling confident of the support of the nation, determined to brave all danger, and attended by a large body of his clergy, he appeared at Westminster. At this time Edward called a parliament together, and summoned Stratford to attend. The Primate boldly presented himself at the Parliament House, and demanded admittance in the King's name; but by order of his enemies the gates were closed and guarded. Had Stratford been a guilty man, he could never calmly have withstood the unprovoked insults now offered to him. "I charge you, in the King's name," exclaimed William Attwood, one of the courtiers, "that you enter not this place." An eager crowd had by this time collected. The Archbishop calmly addressed himself to the assembled people: "Gentlemen," said he, "the King has summoned me, by his writ, to this parliament; and here, as one of the greatest peers of the realm, and having the privilege of the first vote, I must insist upon the rights of my see of Canterbury, and demand the liberty of coming into this house." But the doors were closely barred, and surrounded by guards, so that the Archbishop vainly tried to force an entrance. By this time some of the vagabonds who usually swell a crowd, and delight in creating a disturbance, attacked the Primate, and with blows and foul words endeavoured to drive him back. Even Stratford's calm and equable temper was roused at this dastardly assault. Grasping in his hand his pastoral staff, which was never borne by the Primate himself, except in times of extreme danger, he loudly exclaimed: "In obedience to the mandate of my Sovereign, I have come here, in all humility; this sacred cross I bear in my hand to show that I am ready to die, if need be, in defence of my Church." He then solemnly added: "The curse of Almighty God, and of the blessed Virgin, light upon the heads of those who misrepresent me to the King, and procure this usage upon me."

The noise of the disturbance, which was now growing serious, reached the ears of some of the nobles within, who rushed out and rescued the Archbishop from his unpleasant position. Stratford then took the opportunity of begging these friendly lords to intercede for him with the King. Edward was now beginning to relent, and to allow his better feelings to rise. He therefore consented that the Archbishop should come into the house and be allowed a fair trial. His first outburst of fury over, Edward had had time to sit down and calmly weigh his own conduct and that of the Primate. Happily, the King's good sense and right feeling prevailed. He not only felt in his *own mind* that he had acted hastily and unjustly towards a *valuable and loyal servant*, but he was ready publicly to own it.

Stratford's restoration to favour was as rapid as his disgrace, and when the King made another expedition into France, he again received the Archbishop into his confidence, and made him one of his chief ministers of state. Not content with this, at a parliament held two years afterwards, Edward commanded that the articles of impeachment drawn up against the Archbishop of Canterbury should be brought into the house, to be "annulled and declared insignificant; for," said he, "these said articles are neither reasonable nor true."* Edward inherited all the haughtiness of his race, and therefore we must the more admire the generosity with which he owned he had been in the wrong.

At this point in our history I would introduce to your notice one of those true-hearted and noble Englishmen, who, in all ages, have set us an example of purity and integrity. Gay and thoughtless were the young nobles assembled at King Edward's court, but there was one man among them who had gained the respect and love of all by the purity of his life and the simplicity of his religious faith. It was the learned and pious Thomas Bradwardine, whom Stratford had recommended to the King as worthy in all respects to be his chaplain. In this Stratford showed his wisdom; for Bradwardine combined with a gentle temper an unusual amount of firmness and judgment—qualities which rendered him admirably fitted to deal with a character like Edward's. The Archbishop perceived that the simple piety of his daily life would be a silent yet powerful protest against those who lived only for this world and its pleasures. Edward, though young and thoughtless, was by no means a badly disposed man, and the new chaplain soon gained his love and respect. He accompanied the King on his first campaign, and in a short time became most popular with the army. Though Bradwardine dearly loved to spend his hours in prayer and study, he never shrank from active duty. Foremost in the battle-field he might ever be seen, cheering the wounded, kneeling in prayer by the side of the dying, and encouraging the soldiers to bear themselves manfully in the fight. Though a man of profound learning, he possessed the happy gift of being able to adapt his style to the most ignorant. The rough soldiers listened to his words with rapt attention when with manly eloquence he exhorted them to resist, as true soldiers of the cross, the temptations that surrounded them. So complete was the influence gained by the good chaplain over the minds of these men, that to his prayers alone they attributed the brilliant victories afterwards gained by their King.

* Collier, vol. iii. p. 93.

Beloved by the army and respected by the court, the influence Bradwardine exercised also over Edward was a most happy one. It was mainly owing to his earnest remonstrances that Archbishop Stratford was again received into favour at court. Bradwardine knew full well the Primate's honest worth, and he would not rest until he had fully persuaded Edward that he had wronged and misjudged him. It is surely one of the strongest proofs of Stratford's innocence, that while such a man as Thomas Bradwardine stood by him in his hour of need, the false prelate, Adam Orleton, was his bitterest enemy.

Stratford, now that he was restored to favour, was not unmindful of the promise he had made before all the people in Canterbury Cathedral, and he determined to set himself in earnest to do the work of his diocese. We can clearly see that state affairs were more to the taste of Archbishop Stratford than ecclesiastical matters; but duty with him always stood before inclination, and we must admire the energy with which he threw himself into a work which in many respects was distasteful to him. He corrected a good many abuses, and made some wise laws for the government of his diocese, but I have not space to tell you all about them here.

About this time, the King and Primate were called upon to give proof of their patriotism. Notwithstanding the many rebuffs which the papacy had received in England, Pope Clement VI. determined to make another attempt on the liberties of the English Church. The King's wars were a heavy drain on the public purse, and therefore the people looked with more jealousy than ever on the exactions of the Pope, whose claims were actually five times more than the taxes levied by the King. Edward III. was as true a patriot and as resolute a man as his grandfather, and he was backed in his patriotic measures by the Primate and the whole of the nation. Pope Clement therefore, like many of his predecessors, was destined to meet with signal defeat. We have seen that each new claim put forth by the Church of Rome was more oppressive than the last. Not content with asserting his right to appoint successors to all vacant benefices, Pope Clement now declared that he possessed the power of appointing successors to benefices before they became vacant. Besides this, a certain sum was to be subtracted from the income of each living for the benefit of the Roman Cardinals. A demand so unwarrantable was met as usual by a strong remonstrance. At a parliament held in the year 1343, *the bishops and nobles of England, headed by the King and Primate, wrote a letter of expostulation to the Pope. A portion of this manly appeal I will quote. "In times past," runs the*

document, "the Church of England hath been founded by noble and learned men, to the end that the people might be instructed by such as were of their own language; but the popes being far off, and not understanding the default, have granted the Church and spiritual promotions of this land unto divers persons, some strangers, yea, and enemies to the realm, whereby the money and profits are carried forth, the cures not provided for, alms withdrawn, hospitality decayed, the temples and other buildings belonging to the churches ruinated and fallen down, the charity and devotion of the people sore diminished, and divers other grievous enormities thereby grown, clean contrary to the founders' minds."* Although you have already read many such letters as this, I wish particularly to call your attention to this one, because it proves to us, beyond all doubt, that even at this period the primates and clergy of the Church, as well as the laity, resisted the Pope's unlawful demands; while all the calamities that had befallen the Church were attributed to the grasping policy of the See of Rome.

The mind of the nation was gradually preparing for that grand struggle which took place at the Reformation. A worthy knight, named Sir John Shordich, was commissioned by Edward to present the letter in person to the Pope, and receive his answer. An old writer tells us the knight was ushered into the Pope's presence, who sat in state, surrounded by his cardinals. "But he received not great courteous welcome." Clement took the letter and read it; his countenance at once became overcast. "Well," he angrily exclaimed, "it is not unknown to us who made and indited this; it is not thou who madest it, but there is one that pincheth at us, and we shall punish him right well. We know all; I will answer the letter of the King and Commons as touching these points. The Pope," continues the narrative, "being in great wrath, the knight got him away, doubting if he had staid longer he might have been kept there against his will."* But Edward was not to be frightened into submission; and we shall see, by and by, how promptly and manfully he grappled with the evil.

* Holinshed.

CHAPTER XXX.

EDWARD III. *continued.*—1343 to 1362.

THE STATESMEN OF ENGLAND IN OLDEN TIMES, ECCLESIASTICS AS WELL—THEIR PATRIOTISM AND OPPOSITION TO THE CLAIMS OF THE SEE OF ROME—PEOPLE BEGIN TO OBJECT TO BISHOPS HOLDING OFFICE IN THE STATE—REASONS WHY IN THOSE DAYS IT WAS NECESSARY—VICTORY GAINED BY EDWARD OVER THE FRENCH AT CRESSY—HIS DEVOUT BEHAVIOUR AFTER THE BATTLE—DEATH OF ARCHBISHOP STRATFORD—HIS WISE CONDUCT AS A STATESMAN AND POLITICIAN—CHARACTER OF A TRUE STATESMAN—BRADWARDINE CHOSEN ARCHBISHOP BY THE UNANIMOUS CONSENT OF ALL PARTIES—HIS PREMATURE END—HIS PIETY AND GOODNESS—ONE OF THE CHIEF PIONEERS OF THE REFORMATION—HIS CHARACTER REVIEWED—SHORT EXTRACT FROM ONE OF HIS SERMONS—TERRIBLE RAVAGES OF THE PLAGUE—POPE CLEMENT PROCLAIMS A JUBILEE—THE PLAGUE BREAKS OUT AT ROME—DOUBTS ENTERTAINED OF THE PAPAL INFALLIBILITY—PASSING THE STATUTE OF PROVISORS—SIMON ISLIP ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—SIMPLICITY OF HIS CHARACTER—HIS SEVERITY AND ACTIVITY—DISREGARD OF THE LORD'S DAY AMONG THE LOWER CLASSES—STRICT RULES DRAWN UP WITH REGARD TO ITS OBSERVANCE, BY ARCHBISHOP ISLIP—THE EVILS OF PAST TIMES COMPARED WITH THOSE OF OUR OWN DAY—REFLECTIONS.

We have seen that the great statesmen of England were true patriots, and that with few exceptions they steadily resisted the growing encroachments of the Papal See. I hope you have not forgotten that in past times these statesmen were ecclesiastics as well, and therefore you will at once see the folly of asserting, as some historians do, that the clergy, as a body, encouraged the pretensions of Rome. Their duty, as English statesmen and patriots, forbade them so to act. As I have already told you, nearly all the learning of the nation was confined to the clergy, it was therefore necessary that statesmen should be drawn from their ranks. The close union which then existed between Church and State made it quite possible for the men who held office in both, to unite the two interests, so that the bishops, in serving their country, were considered to be serving the Church at the same time. Now, although at first sight it may seem unwise that a bishop should intermeddle in politics, instead of keeping wholly to his sacred duties, you see there is still much to be said in favour of the system. One would not wish to see it revived in our own day, but in former times it was a necessity. As centuries passed by, however, things became changed. The middle classes, at the time of which I am writing, were fast rising into importance, while the learning, *which had once been confined to the few, gradually became distributed among all ranks.* You cannot therefore be surprised *that the feeling of the nation soon showed itself averse to eccle-*

siastics holding office in the state. It was urged, and not without justice, that as clever and able men could now be found among the ranks of the laity, it would be far better for the bishops to confine themselves to their sacred duties. But great changes are seldom made suddenly, and years passed before the clergy altogether resigned their state duties to the laity; yet things were silently and surely tending towards a change. Archbishop Stratford, one of our ablest statesmen, himself owned that state affairs had too much interfered with his duties as primate. This fact shows us that the opinions of which I have been speaking were gaining ground even amongst the bishops themselves.

In the year 1346, the great victory over the French at Cressy was gained. It is not needful for me in this place to dwell upon the gallant conduct of Edward, and his renowned son, the Black Prince. I will only mention one incident connected with this memorable battle, which many historians have not thought worth recording. After all was over, the King and Prince, weary and blood-stained from the fight, appeared in front of their exhausted army, and reverently falling upon their knees, in a loud voice offered to the God of Sabaoth their heartfelt praises and thanksgivings for the glorious success they had achieved. "For so," says an old writer, "the King commanded and willed no man to make any boast of his own power, but to ascribe all the praise to Almighty God for such a noble victory."* With all his failings, Edward had, in this respect, caught the spirit of the Psalmist, when, with true humility, he exclaimed: "O God, our fathers gat not the land in possession through their own sword, neither was it their own arm that helped them; but Thy right hand and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them."† In these days, how prone are we to ascribe all our successes in war and in other matters to our own arm and our own wisdom. The simple piety of our forefathers is by many looked upon as a kind of obsolete superstition; but surely, while God's word remains, a deep sense of our own impotence and nothingness, and God's omniscient power, can never be out of date, whilst a wilful and daring assertion of our own intellect and superiority must only end in signal disappointment and defeat.

Archbishop Stratford died in the year 1347. I have said enough to show you that he was a man of no ordinary ability; and what was still better, a good and upright Christian. He possessed those sterling qualities which in all ages have characterised our best and greatest statesmen. He revered and clung

* *Holinshed.*

† Psalm xliv. 3, 4.

to all that was time-honoured in the institutions of his country, and yet he was sufficiently liberal-minded to advance with his age in all that was good and true. Fully aware that all classes were growing in weight and influence, the Archbishop wisely persuaded the young King to abide by the principle of Magna Charta, and to seek not money only, but advice from his parliament as well. By this means the popularity of the crown was increased, and the bond strengthened between the King and his people.

But Stratford did not countenance, like some of his class, old and worn out enactments merely because they were ancient. He had the sense to perceive that some of these failed to meet the wants of his own day, and so he set his face against them. Yet he equally disapproved of those unsound lovers of novelty, who, like the Athenians of old, "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing."* A statesman who combines these qualities is a man of the right sort; and if, as in the case of Stratford, all his acts flow from love to God, his Church, and his country, he will indeed be a blessing to the age in which he lives.

By this time Edward had fully learned to know and appreciate real goodness; nothing proves this more than the choice he made of a man to fill the vacant archbishopric. Thomas Bradwardine, his holy and learned chaplain, was unanimously chosen, both by King, monks, and people, as their future primate. It was a generous and unselfish act on the part of Edward; for the faithful chaplain had, by his gentle goodness, wound himself closely round the King's heart. But, with true patriotism, Edward would not allow his own private feelings to interfere with the wishes of his people, and so he cheerfully parted with the beloved friend who had first taught him to respect and admire true humility and goodness. How often do we find that God, for some wise purpose, cuts short the lives of the best and most useful Christians. Bradwardine was at this time abroad, having gone to receive the Pope's consecration. While there, the news reached him that the plague had broken out with fearful virulence in England. Had Bradwardine consulted his own safety, he would have remained where he was; but duty and inclination alike called him home to minister to his suffering countrymen. As on the blood-stained field, so now, his simple faith and trust in God supported him, and he approached the shores of England in a happy, peaceful state of mind. He landed at Dover, and was received by the people with joyful *acclamations*. From thence he proceeded to London. That *night a strange feeling of weariness came upon him, but the*

* Acts xvii. 21.

physician only attributed it to the fatigue he had undergone. Alas ! it proved far otherwise. The fatal plague spot had made its appearance. Bradwardine was a dying man. But death had no terrors for him, for his whole heart was fixed in simple, child-like faith on that Saviour who had trod the dark valley before him. On the 26th August, 1349, he calmly fell asleep in Jesus' bosom, a very saint indeed. It is only by a life of holiness and unselfishness that we can hope for such a death-bed as Bradwardine's. O, may we all so live in this life, as to find in our last hour true peace as he did ; so that, whether death come to us suddenly or not, we may be prepared to meet our Lord on His throne of judgment.

A few words more before we bid farewell to this holy man. One fact I would have you carefully remember. Thomas Bradwardine was one of the chief pioneers of the Reformation. Up to this time the doctrines of the Roman Church (I mean those opinions which the popes made binding on all Christians) had met with little opposition, although, as you know, the pontiff's pretensions to universal sovereignty had been vehemently opposed. Bradwardine was one of the first to show, by able arguments, that those opinions were many of them new, false, and unscriptural. Yet, notwithstanding all this, he gained the respect of Pope Clement, who showed the good sense to appreciate and admire his high and noble character. Many men who in these days imagine that faith in Christ is the only doctrine that a Christian need believe, and who set aside the authority of the Church, and pay but little reverence to the sacraments, which Christ himself ordained, have claimed Thomas Bradwardine as the representative of their opinions. I cannot believe that in common fairness they can do this. Bradwardine certainly believed what they do, but a great deal more besides. He wished to revive again, whole and entire, the ancient Catholic faith, which had become obscured, and which combines the Scriptural doctrines of faith in Christ and obedience to His holy commandments. Though Bradwardine trusted devoutly in his Saviour, he was not like some who, in the pride of their hearts, imagine that the help He gives us in His ordinances are all idle superstitions. Following the example of Christ's holy followers of old, he "ceased not to teach and preach Christ Jesus."* But at the same time he knelt, as they did, "daily in God's temple, continuing stedfastly in the Apostle's doctrine, in breaking of bread and in prayers."† Thomas Bradwardine, besides being one of the most enlightened men of his age, was *deeply read and also very learned*. All loved to honour him

* Acts v. 42.

† Ibid. ii. 42.

with the title of Doctor Profundus, or the profound Doctor. His writings against heretical and false doctrine are full of able reasoning and sound faith, and at the time they were put forth, commanded the attention of all the learned men of Europe. I will conclude this notice of Bradwardine by a short passage from one of his sermons. I am sure you will admire the spirit of simple piety which pervades the discourse. "I think there cannot be any prayer more profitable or more efficacious, whether in prosperity or in adversity, whether concerning what one desires or what one would avoid, than that one may always be able to say, 'Thy will be done.' For this it will come to pass that one shall keep back nothing to oneself, and all one has to the Divine will; wholly desiring the glory and honour of God, and never one's own, whether in great things or small, fearing nothing, and caring for nothing, but gladly embracing, if need be, for the sake of God, the loss of riches, honour, and fame, disgrace, ridicule, persecutions, and whatever miseries, except the displeasure alone of Almighty God."

The plague, or black death, which had proved so fatal to the good Primate Bradwardine, now raged with frightful violence throughout the land. A writer of the time tells us that its ravages were so terrible, that "almost half the people were swept away, insomuch that the living could scarcely bury the dead. Populous towns were in a manner uninhabited. In some of the monasteries, not above two out of twenty monks escaped, while the priests were reduced to so small a number, that in many parishes there was no pastor to officiate."* A proof that the clergy of the Church were active in administering to the sick and dying the comforts of religion.

In the midst of these calamities, Pope Clement proclaimed a jubilee. Hoping that a pilgrimage to Rome might avert God's anger, and stay the plague, he promised to all who would devoutly journey thither, a full and free indulgence. In obedience to the Papal mandate, crowds flocked to the ancient city. The plague broke out there with renewed fury; thousands of pilgrims fell victims to its ravages, while thousands more began to doubt whether the Church of Rome was really infallible.

Notwithstanding the vigorous and manly remonstrance sent by the King and people of England to Pope Clement, he still continued to extort large sums of money from the English Church, bestowing, as before, a number of the richest benefices *on foreigners*. Impoverished by the war, and depopulated by *the plague*, the nation was in no mood to submit quietly to

* Walsingham.

the Papal oppressions. Loud were the murmurs on all sides. Edward, strenuously supported by his prelates and people, acted with firmness and resolution. In the year 1350 he passed the famous law called the Statute of Provisors, which forbade any man to receive any provision or preferment from the Court of Rome, under penalty of fine and ransom to the King, at his will; and those foreigners who had received the income of English benefices, were commanded forthwith to forfeit their money to the King, on pain of imprisonment. In this wise act Edward was ably supported by Simon Islip, who had succeeded to the Archbishopric on the death of Bradwardine. Islip was a man of energy and good sense, and a strict disciplinarian. He made several wise and upright laws for the good of the Church, and at the same time took care to see that they were enforced. The reckless extravagance of the Court grieved the honest mind of the Archbishop, and, like Stratford, he boldly reproached the King for the thoughtless manner in which he wasted the public money. It was an unpleasant duty, but Islip did not shrink from it; nor did he preach to others what he was not prepared to practise himself. He cared nothing for outward parade or show; while all the arrangements of his palace were conducted with singular economy and simplicity. A simple life, like Simon's, is the best and surest argument against self-indulgence and waste, and is an argument which all understand. The Archbishop soon gained the respect of the people, and although at times his acts were severe, they were tolerated as coming from one who never spared himself. Complaints had reached the Archbishop's ears, that the punishments which the laws of the Church inflicted on offending priests were altogether insufficient. It was urged that priests, who had been guilty of heinous crimes, were so gently used that they grew worse and worse, so that their conduct became an open scandal to the whole of Christendom. The Archbishop dealt promptly and wisely with the evil, and, we must own, was not too indulgent to the offenders. He ordered that they should be imprisoned for life in the Bishop's jail, kept under constant and vigorous penance, and never again be restored to their former position, however penitent they might show themselves. Nor was the primate more indulgent with regard to their daily food. He ordered that every Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, they should be fed only on coarse bread and water; on other days their diet was to be bread and weak beer. The luxury of the week was reserved for Sunday—it consisted of pulse, in addition to the *other choice dainties*. Thus was justice satisfied, and public *dissatisfaction allayed*. Now that I am speaking of Simon

Islip, and the laws he passed for the good of religion, I must not forget to mention the reverence he showed for the Lord's day. I would have you observe, however, that laws for the due observance of this holy day had already been made by the Church, so that Islip was introducing no new thing when he ordained that these laws should be enforced.

Men like Stephen Langton and Islip, who revive good laws that have become obsolete, are doing as great a benefit to their country as they who make new ones; although such men are often blamed for inventing foolish novelties. "The Canons of Church enact," says the Archbishop, "that all Sundays should be solemnly kept; that upon this day people are obliged to forbear working, and secular employments; to repair to their parish church; to entreat God Almighty's pardon for the omissions and other faults of the week past; to learn their duty from their pastor, and put up their prayers for the benefit of Church and State. But, unhappily," continues the Archbishop, "in some parts of my province, a scandalous and irreligious practice has got footing. The Lord's day is abominably profaned; markets are publicly kept on that day, and people are circumventing one another, when they ought to be at their devotions." Thus he significantly shows that neglect of the ordinances of religion is pretty sure to lead on to rebellion against lawful authority. "For the people," says he, "meet on that day in great numbers against religion and law, and give occasion to routs and riots. So God is dishonoured on this Holy Festival by luxury, intemperance, and all kinds of license." London appears to have been the head-quarters of this evil; for the Primate's letter is addressed to the Bishop of that place—with orders, however, to send it to the rest of the prelates. He urges the Bishop, in conclusion, "to take effectual care to suppress these disorders, that the solemnities of religion may be duly observed, and the people retrieved to regularity and devotion."*

This vivid description of the neglect of God's holy day among the lower classes in our great city, five hundred years ago, much resembles the sad state of things in our own time. But, unhappily, the evil has gone on increasing instead of diminishing; and we are suffering from the miseries which those who scorn the laws of the Church and the holy influence of religion have brought upon us. Those misguided men who would withhold from our poorer brethren the blessings which the Church so fully extends to them, and would lead them to regard with contempt the self-denying labour of Christ's ministers, well deserve the abhorrence of all good and honest Christians. The day

* Collier, vol. iii. p. 124.

must come when, at Christ's judgment seat, they will be called upon to answer for the souls of those they have so cruelly deceived.

Archbishops had power in olden times to stem the tide of evil; but, unhappily, such is not the case now. Even if our Church has wise canons, she is powerless to enforce them, for her discipline has been trampled upon, and her ordinances neglected; and so she has well nigh lost all hold on the ignorant and unruly. All honour be to those holy men who are trying to revive her divine and wholesome authority. Such priests are worthy followers of that Blessed Master who went about doing good; for they strive to bring the wretched, and poor, and ignorant into the fold of the Good Shepherd.

CHAPTER XXXI.

EDWARD III. *continued.*—1362 to 1376.

ISLIP'S INJUNCTIONS CONCERNING THE FESTIVALS—HIS DEATH AND BURIAL—POPE URBAN CLAIMS HOMAGE OF EDWARD, AND DEMANDS PAYMENT OF THE ANNUAL TRIBUTE OF ONE THOUSAND MARKS—DEFIANT REFUSAL OF THE KING AND PEOPLE—EDWARD'S MINISTERS OF STATE ALL ECCLESIASTICS—WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM, DUKE OF LANCASTER, HEADS THE PARTY THAT IS OPPOSED TO THE CLERGY HOLDING OFFICE IN THE STATE—HIS BOLD, UNSCRUPULOUS CHARACTER—EDWARD CONSENTS TO EMPLOY SOME LAYMEN AS MINISTERS OF STATE—BUT THE PLAN NOT SUCCEEDING HE RECALLS THE BISHOPS—THE OPINIONS PROPOUNDED BY THOMAS BRADWARDINE GAIN GROUND—JOHN WICLIF—HIS POPULARITY AT OXFORD—HE OPENLY EXPOSES THE UNLAWFULNESS OF THE POPE'S CLAIMS—ATTACKS THE MENDICANT ORDERS—IN THIS HE IS SUPPORTED BY THE PRIMATE AND PEOPLE—HIS BOLDNESS AND ELOQUENCE—EDWARD III. BECOMES WEAK AND IMBECILE TOWARDS THE END OF HIS LIFE—DEATH OF THE BLACK PRINCE—NOBLENES OF HIS CHARACTER—HIS POPULARITY—QUEEN PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT—HER PIETY AND ABILITY—SCENE ON HER DEATH-BED—HER LOVE FOR ARCHITECTURE—"EARLY ENGLISH" AND "DECORATED" STYLES OF ARCHITECTURE—ARCHITECTURE AT THIS PERIOD IN ITS PRIME—ITS SUBSEQUENT DECAY—DEBASED PERIOD.

ONE more wise measure I must mention, that Archbishop Islip put in force. He set his face against the superstitious multiplication of Holy Days, which the Church of Rome encouraged, and ordered his province to forbear working only on those Festivals which he, as Primate of the English Church, sanctioned. These Festivals were much the same as those which Simon Mepeham had ordered to be observed; therefore you see the English Church was slow to sanction any addition to her *list of Holy Days*. Archbishop Islip died in the year 1366, *having gained the respect of the King and nation by his useful*

and self-denying life. His last injunction was a characteristic one. He desired that his funeral should be strictly private, and conducted with as little expense as possible. Happily, at this time, Edward had no lack of good and honest men to support him in his patriotic measures. At the opening of Parliament, in the year 1366, Simon Langham, Bishop of Ely and Lord Chancellor, acquainted the Lords and Commons that Pope Urban V. meditated a fresh onslaught on the liberties of the English Church. Urban declared that the homage which King John had so weakly yielded to the Bishop of Rome, it was the duty also of his successors to perform. He therefore cited King Edward to appear in person at Rome, to perform the same homage. Pope Urban also demanded the annual tribute of one thousand marks, which as yet had not been paid by Edward into the papal coffers. "For, for this payment," says Urban, "King John hath engaged himself, his heirs, and his successors." It was a bold demand, and was met by a defiant refusal. The following admirable reply, drawn up by the King, the Lords, and Commons, shows us, in a few decisive words, the resolute temper of those who penned it: "We are well aware that neither King John, nor any other king, could bring his realm and dominions under such servitude and subjection, unless by common consent of Parliament, which consent was not obtained; and therefore the acknowledgment and promise of tribute to the See of Rome was against his coronation oath, not to mention many other disabling reasons. If, therefore, his Holiness shall attempt anything against the King by law, the King and all his subjects will, with all their force and power, oppose and resist the same." Edward, in order further to show his independence and contempt of the Papal menaces, ordered that in future the money called "Peter's pence" should be withheld. But although for a time this ancient tribute was suspended, Pope Urban managed to claim it again; and so it continued to be paid till the Reformation. But Edward, although he cared little for the authority of the Pope, and systematically opposed his encroachments, paid all due respect to the clergy of his own Church, and knew how to appreciate their services. That this was undoubtedly the case was proved by the fact that, at this time, nearly all his chief ministers of State were ecclesiastics. I shall not trouble you with all their names, but will only mention two of the number, who are well worthy to be singled out from the rest. One of these is Simon Langham, Lord Chancellor, *and afterwards* Archbishop of Canterbury; and William of Wykeham, Keeper of the Privy Seal, one of Edward's wisest *councillors*, and the friend of the Black Prince. I have specially

noted the name of this admirable statesman, because it is to him that we owe the construction and restoration of some of our finest cathedrals and parish churches. He possessed a keen sense of what is most true and noble in Christian architecture, and when he became Bishop of Winchester, he threw his whole heart and soul into the work. William of Wykeham was the founder of that noble style of architecture which prevailed at this period, and which is called the "perpendicular" style. But I must allude to this subject again at the end of my chapter.

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, one of the King's sons, took a very active part in public affairs. He was a bold, unscrupulous, headstrong prince, and opposed many of his father's schemes in rather a violent and unbecoming manner. He was one of those men who, like many in our own day, seem to delight in exposing the faults of the clergy, and in persecuting them whenever an opportunity offers. John of Gaunt was the leader of that party, now daily becoming more powerful, which objected to ecclesiastics holding offices of state. When he found his father placed confidence in his clergy, and, for good reasons, bestowed on them nearly all the posts of honour and trust in his kingdom, the Duke and his followers became impatient, and determined to do their utmost to put a stop to what they considered an evil. But Edward was too wise a man calmly to succumb to the mere prejudice of party feeling; and knowing that the men he had chosen were worthy of the confidence reposed in them, he returned an evasive but moderate reply to those who clamoured for change. "I shall ordain," he said on this point, "as it shall seem best to us by the advice of our good council." Yet we find that Edward was not unwilling, for the sake of peace, to yield certain points to his subjects; and so he consented to give the matter a fair trial. Accordingly he removed the Bishops who held the offices of Chancellor, Treasurer, and Privy Seal, and substituted laymen in their places. But the country was not yet ripe for such an important change. The laymen who had taken the places of the ecclesiastics managed matters so clumsily that Edward was forced to remove them, and recal the Bishops. But John of Gaunt was not to be so easily silenced, and would probably have become more troublesome, had he not, in the stirring times which were now dawning on the country, found full scope for his restless ambition.

The opinions which Thomas Bradwardine had so ably propounded were still working in men's minds. He had fanned *the spark which, before long, burst into a mighty flame; and many who at first only doubted the Pope's right to interfere with*

the liberty of their Church, now began to look with suspicion on the doctrines which the Church of Rome upheld. Up to this time, however, no man had dared openly to raise his voice against the false teaching that had crept into the Church. But now God in His wisdom raised up a man who became the leader and representative of those who had long cherished in secret a desire for reform. Every one who has read the history of England, has heard of John Wiclif. Like Thomas à Becket, so varied are the opinions formed of this great man, that in attempting to give you a fair, unbiassed view of his character, I feel I have undertaken no easy task. I will endeavour, however, to deal fairly in the matter, doing full justice to his merits, yet at the same time not concealing his faults. To the party who desired reform in Church and State John of Gaunt attached himself. Subsequent events show us, however, that this ambitious statesman had no real love for religious truth. He had little honest principle to guide him, and so he joined any party in the Church which at the time happened to fall in with his own private schemes. Such a man as this does little credit to the cause he advocates, but on the contrary a good deal of harm. It was John Wiclif's misfortune, rather than his fault, that the Duke of Lancaster now boldly proclaimed himself his patron and supporter. Before, however, I enter upon the history of this remarkable man, I must, as briefly as possible, give you an idea of the religious opinions he, at this time, held. These opinions were not novel ones, although, as I have said, until now none had dared boldly and openly to express them. We often find that great religious movements have originated at the University of Oxford, and so it was with the opinions of Wiclif. Oxford, at this time, was strongly anti-papal, and therefore when John Wiclif boldly denounced the acts of the Pope, he at once became a popular hero, and drew a vast number of disciples after him. But I would not have you suppose that at this time Wiclif was regarded with suspicion by the highest authorities in the Church. On the contrary, the facts of history show us that while his course was a moderate and a reasonable one, the Bishops were ready and willing to give him all the countenance in their power. The wise and patriotic Simon Langham, who was at this time Archbishop of Canterbury, was Wiclif's intimate friend. That he appreciated the qualities of the Reformer is evident from the fact, that while he held the office of Chancellor, he recommended Wiclif to the King, and he became one of the royal chaplains.* At this time, the *opinions of Wiclif* entirely agreed with those of the Primate

* Dr. Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops*, vol. iv. p. 197.

and the rest of the nation. First of all he strenuously opposed the Mendicant Friars, who, by this time, had become most unpopular in England. I have shown you how, in the first instance, these men, by an active life of usefulness and self-denial, did great good, especially among the poor. Now, however, they had become the mere tools of the Pope, and did infinite harm to the cause of true religion, by encouraging all his unjust aggressions. They not only, as I have shown you, taught a good deal that was really false, but went about in different parishes, opposing the lawful clergyman; often preaching against him, and leading his people to regard him with contempt. By this means a separate community was established in the parish, and a sinful division made. So that these friars, like our modern sects of dissenters, caused infinite harm and confusion in the Church. Wiclif was not slow to expose these abuses, and he did it boldly and well. Now, at the time of which I am speaking, Wiclif, in common with the rest of his countrymen, was prepared to pay respect to the Pope, as lawful head of the Church; he was only indignant at the way in which the Roman Pontiffs had overstepped the limits of their authority. John Wiclif was not the man to sit down quietly and acquiesce in an abuse, but regardless of all risk, he boldly and manfully raised his voice against the evil. In words full of Christian eloquence, which breathed a spirit of pious loyalty to his Church, he exposed the unlawfulness of the Pope's claim. All eyes were now turned towards the obscure parish priest, who had so nobly and openly defied the wrath of the sovereign Pontiff. From that hour Wiclif became a marked man. I must, however, reserve what I have to say further about this famous Reformer for another chapter, as I have several other matters on which I first wish to say a few words.

We frequently find that the greatest and most vigorous minds often become the most imbecile in old age. It was so with Edward III. Though in the prime of life, he had achieved, as a warrior and statesman, the noblest deeds. In old age he became weak and sensual—a mere tool in the hands of others. It must have been a sad and mournful sight, the once vigorous man thus sinking into apathy; and when, in 1376, the Black Prince died, a heavy cloud hung over the land. As the church bells tolled for the departing spirit, young and old, rich and poor, mourned long and deeply for the gallant Christian soldier, whom all had learned to love and respect. This noble-minded prince had long been the pillar and stay of the nation. An old writer, in the following words, thus ably sums up his character. “*This prince,*” he says, “*was of such excellent demeanour, so valiant,*

wise, and politic in his doings, that the very and perfect representative of knighthood appeared most lively in his person whilst he lived ; so that the loss of him struck a general sorrow into the hearts of all the English nation.”*

In speaking of the Black Prince, I should indeed be guilty of a sad omission, if I forgot to mention his excellent and noble-minded mother. Of all our Queen Consorts, I do think Philippa of Hainault, wife of Edward III., is most worthy of our admiration. With a strong will, and a nerve and courage almost masculine, this noble Queen combined all those gentle graces which make the character of a true Christian woman so lovable. The influence she exercised over her stern partner was a holy and a sanctifying one. The description which the writer I have already quoted gives of her last hours, brings forcibly before us this good Queen’s unselfish piety. “When Queen Philippa must needs depart out of this transitory life, she desired to speak with the King her husband. And when he came to her, with a sorrowful heart, to see her in that state, she took him by the hand, and with courteous and loving words, required of him to grant her three requests. ‘My Lord,’ said she, ‘I will that all such merchants, and other men, with whom I have bargained, whatever be their condition, may be answered of all such debts as I owe them, whether they dwell on this side the sea, or beyond. I will also that all such ordinances and promises as I have made to churches, either in this realm or beyond the seas, may be performed ; and lastly, when it shall please God to call you out of this world, I pray you to choose none other sepulchre but that beside me in the Abbey at Westminster.’” *

That Edward could have proved faithless to such a consort, is, I think, the chief blot in his character. While Queen Philippa diligently superintended the education of all her children, she took a lively interest in public affairs, and supported, with the loyalty of a true wife, all her husband’s schemes for the improvement of the people. Her chief delight, however, was in church architecture ; and under her active superintendence some of our noblest churches were built. In this good work she spared no pains nor expense, and was ably supported by the famous William of Wykeham, whose name I have already mentioned, and the good archbishop, Simon Langham. Queen Philippa founded the college at Oxford, called “Queen’s College” after her ; “furnishing it with a church and goodly buildings, that the scholars might both serve God, and profit in *their studies*.”* Before concluding this chapter, I must say a

* Holinshed.

few words about the architecture of this period. I have shown you how, ever since the Normans set foot in England, the architecture of our land had gradually gone on improving, until at the time of the Edwards, we may truly say, it reached as near to perfection as any earthly work can. About the time of King John and Henry III., I mentioned that the style of church building was characterised by a light and graceful simplicity. The leading features of this truly elegant style, which is called "Early English," are small lancet windows, acute arches, lightly ornamented with mouldings, and delicate pillars, elegantly clustered together. About the end of the thirteenth century, however, this style was succeeded by one still more noble and beautiful. Instead of lancets we have large windows, divided by mullions, and filled at the head with most graceful stone tracery, carved in the form of round geometrical ornaments, or in lines which flow the one into the other. Whenever in any of our cathedrals or churches you see these gorgeous "decorated" windows (as they are called), remember that they were all once filled with the richest stained glass, which, unhappily, in too many instances, has been ruthlessly destroyed. The style of which I am speaking, and which prevailed during the greater part of the reigns of the three Edwards, is called by architects the "Decorated Period;" and, as its name tells us, is chiefly distinguished by a vast amount of elegant carving and decoration. It is a true and noble style; for it strives to follow as closely as possible the handiwork of the Almighty, remembering that every form in nature is perfect. Fruit, flowers, nay, even the forms of men and animals, are admirably imitated in the hard, unyielding stone; while the capital of every pillar, every arch and corbel bear witness to the enlightened thought and cunning skill of each individual workman. Nothing gives us a better idea of the beauty of this style than the exquisite monuments raised to the memory of the dead. These are mostly oblong tombs of stone or marble, elaborately carved at the sides; while on the top of the slab reposes at full length, and with hands clasped, the figure of the departed. In many instances, a richly ornamented canopy covers the whole. The tomb of Queen Eleanor, consort of Edward I., in Westminster Abbey, is a noble specimen of this kind of tomb. But the one which most called forth my admiration was the monument of Edward II., in Gloucester Cathedral. The figures on both these tombs surpass in their calm simplicity and beauty anything that can be conceived. Towards the reign of Edward III., we find a further change taking place in the style of architecture, which many *think was not for the better*. The large windows still remain,

but the tracery in the head is no longer flowing or geometrical. The rigid lines of the mullions are carried up to the top ; the spaces between being again divided by perpendicular lines, and so it is called the "Perpendicular Style." William of Wykeham was the chief founder of this school of architecture, and an immense number of churches were built or restored at this period. It is a subject full of interest, and therefore I could not allow it to pass unnoticed. Whenever you pay a visit to any of our ancient cathedrals or churches, I would have you view the different parts of the building intelligently, and then you will fully appreciate the pains which our pious forefathers took to raise temples worthy of the worship of Almighty God.

As we stand beneath the canopy of some richly-carved tomb, or gaze at the graceful arcade of arches, flowing the one into the other, we hardly know how, until lost in the distance, we think with wonder of the patience and intelligence of our ancestors. It is indeed surprising that with such models before us, we could ever have tolerated in the building of our churches an impure or base style. But so it was. From the time of Edward III., this noble art gradually decayed, until, in the eighteenth century, it reached the climax of all that is most odious and unchristian. Many of our London churches were built during this debased period. I need hardly remind you that the chief characteristics of this mode of church building are high and heavy galleries, an elevated pulpit, raised in front of the altar, and excluding all view of it ; an almost total absence of chancel ; and windows, the form of which would disgrace any ordinary warehouse. Happily, in these days we have learnt to value that true and Christian style which prevailed in olden times ; so that most of our new churches are constructed on the plan of the ancient ones.

CHAPTER XXXII.

EDWARD III. *continued.*—1376 to 1377.

PATRIOTIC ARCHBISHOPS — PIOUS AND PRACTICAL CHARACTER OF SIMON LANGHAM—HIS LOVE FOR ARCHITECTURE— HE BUILDS THE CLOISTERS AT WESTMINSTER—SIMON SUDBURY, BISHOP OF LONDON—HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH WICLIF AND JOHN OF GAUNT—IMPETUOSITY OF HIS CHARACTER—SCENE WITH THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS—HE IS CREATED ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—POPE GREGORY PUBLISHES A BULL AGAINST WICLIF—HE ACCUSES THE BISHOPS AND PEOPLE OF ENGLAND OF LUKEWARMNESS—RELUCTANCE OF SUDBURY TO PROCEED AGAINST WICLIF—OPINIONS OF WICLIF CONSIDERED—DIFFICULTIES UNDER WHICH THE CLERGY OF THAT DAY LABOURED—THEIR MODERATION—ARCHBISHOP SUDBURY CALLS A SYNOD IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL TO EXAMINE WICLIF'S OPINIONS—JOHN OF GAUNT AND LORD PERCY SUPPORT THE REFORMER—STORMY SCENE IN THE CATHEDRAL—JOHN OF GAUNT'S UNSEEMLY BEHAVIOUR—FORBEARANCE OF BISHOP COURTENAY—THE LONDONERS SUPPORT THEIR BISHOP—JOHN OF GAUNT AND HIS PARTY RETIRE—UNPOPULARITY OF JOHN OF GAUNT—THE LONDONERS ATTACK HIS PALACE OF THE SAVOY—BISHOP COURTENAY'S GENEROUS CONDUCT—DEATH OF EDWARD III.—HIS CHARACTER AS GIVEN US BY HOLINSHEDE.

THOSE who disregard the facts of history, and colour past events to suit their own religious views, have asserted that at this period the clergy, as a body, favoured the growing encroachments of the Church of Rome. To show that such an assertion as this is false, I have only to mention the names of the admirable primates who flourished at this time. Archbishops Stratford, Bradwardine, Islip, and Langham, were all, as we have seen, patriotic defenders of the liberty of their church; and in this respect they represented the feeling of the King and the greater part of the English nation. I am sorry that time will not permit me to dwell a little longer on the character of Simon Langham. In all his acts he proved himself to be a worthy successor of Bradwardine and Islip. A man of deep religious feeling, he was also an able and active statesman, and a clever man of business as well. Langham was a great lover of architecture, and, in conjunction with William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, gave his money liberally for the pious work of building and restoring churches, encouraging his people to admire what was beautiful and true in Christian art. It is to the liberality and good taste of Archbishop Langham that we owe our fine cloisters at Westminster Abbey. This work is one of the earliest specimens we possess of the Perpendicular style of architecture, which I described to you in my last chapter. As a proof of the *pious and practical character* of Archbishop Langham's mind, I *will just quote one of the rules* which he gave his clergy at a

synod held in the year 1364, at Ely. "Let the priest in the Church," runs the canon, "perform divine service wholly and devotedly; namely, the lessons, hymns, psalms, and whatever else is recited in the Church, giving a perfect pronunciation of the words, and a careful attention of the mind to the sense of the words, lest (which God forbid), instead of a living and perfect sacrifice, a mutilated or dead sacrifice be offered. Let all pastors of souls and parish priests, when they have finished the divine offices in the Church, diligently give themselves to prayer, and to the reading of Holy Scripture; that, as pertains to their office, they may be prepared to give a reason to every one inquiring of hope and faith. And let them be always intent on the doctrine and operation of Scripture, like the staves in the rings of the ark, that by assiduous reading, as by daily food, their discourse may be nourished and grow fat."*

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who, I told you, played a very active part in public affairs, had managed to make a very stanch friend of Simon Sudbury, who at that time was Bishop of London. Sudbury was a man of considerable ability, and was destined to play a conspicuous part in the events of his time. At the court of his friend the Duke of Lancaster, he met the famous John Wiclif, and the poet Chaucer, who so ably defended in his poems the cause of the reformer. Up to this time, Wiclif had brought forward no opinions to which an English churchman could object; and so Sudbury approved of his patriotic resistance to the claims of the Pope, and his enmity to the friars, while he listened with approval to his vehement arguments. Sudbury was a man of impulse. He threw himself with ardour into any cause he espoused, caring little for his own popularity or safety. But though stout-hearted and fearless of danger, I think it would have been wiser, had he, in some instances, proceeded with more deliberation, and considered the consequences before he acted. It is true that the holiest people are often unpopular, as you know was the case with our blessed Lord and His Apostles; yet I think the Bishop might have had more influence had he been less impetuous, and had he not disdained to win the good opinion of others. To prove what I have stated, I will relate an incident which took place while Sudbury was still Bishop of London. In the year 1370, the Pope had proclaimed a jubilee in honour of St. Thomas à Becket, and offered to those who would journey to his shrine a plenary, or full indulgence. It was the festival of the translation of the martyr's bones; and hundreds of devout people journeyed across the *Kentish downs* to pay their homage to England's most popular

* Wilkins. See Dr. Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops*.

saint. It so happened that Bishop Sudbury fell in with the pilgrims near Canterbury. Fresh from the society of the reformer Wiclif, Sudbury was in no mood to look with calmness on such a scene. His enthusiastic mind was shocked at what he considered a gross superstition; and without considering the unsuitableness of the time and place, he vehemently addressed the crowds who thronged around him. His words were novel and startling, and must have sounded very much like blasphemy in the ears of the devotees. "Think ye, my friends," he exclaimed, "that this journey to Canterbury will avail anything? I tell ye nay. This plenary indulgence ye hope to find there is all useless unless ye repent." A wise remark enough, but surely ill-timed. Sudbury lacked the judgment to perceive that at such a moment a sudden and violent onslaught on popular feeling and prejudice could only stir up anger and opposition, and would fail to do any lasting good. The devotees of St. Thomas of Canterbury were furious. A stout-hearted knight of Kent, Sir Thomas Aldon, rode up to the Bishop, who stood calmly gazing on the exasperated crowd, and with a menacing and wrathful look, exclaimed: "My Lord Bishop, how dare ye thus stir up the people against St. Thomas? On my soul! ye will surely die an ill death some day for this evil act." A loud and prolonged "Amen" burst from the assembled multitude as the Bishop retired. The fatal prediction was too surely fulfilled. Simon Sudbury never again recovered his popularity. In the year 1376 he was elected Archbishop of Canterbury; and with an honest heart he determined to give to John Wiclif all the support and countenance in his power. But the Pope had already taken alarm. The opinions which Wiclif had so boldly proclaimed were most dangerous to the See of Rome, and they must at all hazards be put a stop to. Pope Gregory XI. knew very well, however, that the free spirit of the English would never brook, as in former times, a peremptory interference with their rights; and the bull he now sent to the primate and Bishop of London is a quaint mixture of flattery and command. "England," runs the document, "hath ever been famous for the force of her realm, and the riches of her country, but more especially for the piety of her people, and the good condition of religion in the island. Such was the former character of the English nation; her clergy were remarkable for their learning, gravity, and devotion, and noble champions for the orthodox belief. The prelates not only guarded their own charge, but extended also their charity to strangers; being solicitous for the *propagating of truth and the support of order in foreign countries.*" *If any think that at this time the archbishops and*

bishops were prepared to persecute Wiclif for his religious opinions, the conclusion of Pope Gregory's address decides the matter at once. Surely had they taken active steps against the reformer, Pope Gregory would never have blamed their inactivity and lukewarmness. "Now, alas!" he goes on to say, "the clergy of England are sadly degenerating, and have become inactive and negligent. They are by no means so sharp-sighted as to prevent danger, or stop the approach of the enemy. John Wiclif, rector of Lutterworth, in the diocese of Lincoln, hath put forth false opinions which tend to the subversion of the Church. We therefore require you to seize and secure the person of the said John Wiclif; to take his confession, to transmit to us an account of it, and keep Wiclif in custody till further orders from our Court of Rome." The time had not yet arrived for a papal bull to be entirely disregarded; the great heads of the Church still spoke with authority in England; and Archbishop Sudbury, although he may have objected to taking measures against a friend whose opinions he had respected, felt compelled to satisfy the papal demands. Possibly, he may have thought that Wiclif's opinions, if true, would bear the searching scrutiny that was to be brought to bear upon them. Be this as it may, he held a synod at St. Paul's Cathedral, and cited Wiclif to account for his doctrines before him, the Bishop of London, and others.

It is with reluctance that I bring myself to say anything against the opinions of a man so honest and well intentioned as Wiclif; but the truth must not be hid. It must be stated fairly and openly, that all parties may have full justice, for in these days we hear far too much of the perfection of Wiclif's character and doctrine on the one hand, and the baseness and superstition of his opposers on the other. Let us try to avoid either extreme. We are too prone to imagine that the farther we sever from the Roman Church the nearer we are to Gospel truth. But let us remember that a too great veneration for the authority of the Church, and an utter disregard of it, are equally displeasing in the sight of God. With regard to the opinions of Wiclif, I would have you carefully bear in mind one important fact. The leader of a great reformation cannot be, and ought not to be, made responsible for all the extravagant opinions of his followers. Wiclif, in common with the leaders of great movements, has suffered sadly from the fanaticism and false zeal of his disciples. Many of their erroneous opinions *have been palmed upon him*, and I feel sure that in the honesty *of his heart* he would have disclaimed them. Still, as we shall find, by and by, some, even of Wiclif's opinions, were open to

censure. Many of them we may admire as true and scriptural ; but we are bound, as English churchmen, to set our faces against others, because they strike at the root of those ancient doctrines which the Catholic or universal Church has, from the time of the Apostles, held to be necessary to salvation, and which, God be thanked, the Bible and our creeds have preserved to us.

As long as Wiclif allowed the ancient doctrine of Christianity to remain untouched, the Primate and bishops of the English Church adhered to him. But when he openly assailed these, can we blame the clergy of England for turning their faces from him, and for defending what they justly believed to be the truth?

In these days, whether right or wrong, our government permits, and our clergy are forced to wink at every kind of heresy and error. They are powerless to put it down by force : they can only teach true doctrine, which, perhaps after all, is the surest way to grapple with the evil. In former times the case was very different. In order fully to understand the difficult position in which our ancestors were placed in the days of Wiclif, we must remember that up to that time the doctrine of the Christian Church had never been openly and systematically assailed ; therefore, toleration, that is, the sanctioning of any form of religious opinion, was a thing unknown, because it had never been needed.* Now, the law of the Church and the law of the land professed in those days to uphold certain religious opinions ; and if any man taught differently from these, he became at once liable to punishment unless he consented to give up such opinions ; just as a man who stole would, as a matter of course, be punished, unless he restored what he had taken. In these days of universal toleration, we may object to, and even hate such a system, but we cannot in common honesty blame those zealous and conscientious men who were bound by the law of their country to carry it out. In the days of Wiclif, even his most ardent followers owned that the bishops proceeded in their investigation with singular moderation. That the Primate Sudbury was most reluctant to have anything to do with the business is clear from the fact that he allowed six months to pass by before taking any notice of Pope Gregory's urgent appeal.

I have entered thus fully upon the subject in order that you may be the better able to judge fairly of the scenes I am about to describe. But first let me briefly bring before your notice one or two of the opinions which Wiclif at this time held, and *which had so greatly roused the indignation of Pope Gregory.*

* Dr. Hook.

He asserted that the Church of Rome is no more the head of all churches than any other church, and that St. Peter had no greater authority given him than the rest of the Apostles; that neither the Pope nor any other prelate hath any right to punish offenders against the discipline of the Church; but that such persons should be permitted to go at large and have freedom of opinion. He further asserted that the Holy Eucharist, after consecration, is merely an emblem and sign of Christ's body and blood, and that the word of God is a sufficient direction for the life and government of a Christian. Wiclif's enemies have accused him at this time of holding many other opinions far more violent than these; but I think it is right to say that they were added afterwards, possibly by him, or at all events by his followers.

I have told you that Archbishop Sudbury at length consented to hold a synod in St. Paul's Cathedral to consider Wiclif's opinions. It was a scene of stirring interest for the Londoners when the Reformer, accompanied by his friend and patron, the Duke of Lancaster and Lord Percy, approached the gates of St. Paul's Cathedral. Wiclif walked silently along, pondering, doubtless, on all that was coming upon him. But John of Lancaster was in high spirits; he was better pleased than ever with the man whose cause he came to support; for Wiclif had openly exposed the vices and follies of the clergy, and this fell in with the Duke's political views. Now, thought he, those proud priests shall be abashed and confounded before all the people. "Doctor," said the Duke, with his usual effrontery, "keep up your spirits, for these bishops are but ignorants in respect of you." A large concourse of people had by this time assembled near the church, and as they seemed in no hurry to make way for the new comers, John of Gaunt and his party had to use considerable force to effect an entrance. The hot-tempered Duke could ill brook opposition. He was not popular with the Londoners, and their want of respect irritated and chafed him. A loud and angry altercation ensued, which soon attracted the attention of Courtenay, Bishop of London, who was awaiting the arrival of Wiclif inside the church. Dreading that the sacred building should be profaned by an unseemly commotion, Courtenay pressed forward and remonstrated with the two nobles—Archbishop Sudbury and Wiclif standing aloof. Bishop Courtenay was a man of noble birth and commanding presence, and had won the good will of the Londoners *by his liberality and condescending manners*; they therefore *eagerly pressed forward to listen to the hot debate which now ensued*. "Lord Percy," said the Bishop, "had I known what

masteries you would have kept, I would have stopped you from coming hither." John of Gaunt was not the man to stand by and say nothing. The Bishop's sacred office and the holiness of the place were nothing to him, and his blood was all on fire from the unceremonious pushing and jostling he had just endured. "I tell ye, Bishop," interrupted the Duke, "he *shall* keep such masteries here, though you say nay." Courtenay was silent. "Wiclif," said Lord Percy, with a sneer, "sit down; you have many things to answer to, and therefore have need of a soft seat." With quiet dignity the Bishop resisted the insult to his lawful authority. "Nay, Lord Percy, he shall stand; it is unreasonable that one cited before his ordinary should sit down during his answer." "The Lord Percy's motion for Wiclif is but reasonable," exclaimed the Duke of Lancaster, with intemperate haste; "and as for you, my Lord Bishop, who are grown so proud and arrogant, I will bring down the pride, not of you alone, but of all the prelacy of England. Thou bearest thyself so brag upon thy parents who shall not be able to help thee. Marry, they shall have enough to do to help themselves." Courtenay bore this insolent speech with admirable forbearance. "My confidence," said he, "is not in my parents nor in any other man, but only in God, in whom I trust; by whose assistance I will be bold to speak the truth." Boiling with rage at the calmness of his opponent, the Duke muttered between his teeth: "Rather than take these words at thine hands, I will pluck thee by the hair of thy head out of the Church." The assembled Londoners overheard these last indignant words, and were by no means disposed to allow the threat to be carried into execution. They respected and liked their Bishop, and instantly pressed forward to his rescue. The proud Duke and his party were therefore forced to beat an ignominious retreat, followed by the rude shouts of the mob, who loudly declared they would rather lose their lives than suffer their Bishop to be thus insulted in his own cathedral. One admires the spirit of chivalry and love of justice which animated this London mob, who respected God's minister and stood by him in his hour of need. The account I have given you of this remarkable scene, which certainly testifies to Bishop Courtenay's moderation and Christian forbearance, is not likely to be an unfair one as regards Wiclif and his party. It is given us by John Foxe, the reformed writer, who, in his zeal for what he believed to be Gospel truth, took no pains to conceal his hatred for the Church and bishops. When his testimony therefore tells in *favour of the bishops*, it is to be believed, for we are sure their *conduct will not be viewed in too favourable a light*. I would

have you observe that throughout this stormy meeting Archbishop Sudbury, though present, observed a strict silence. Both he and Wiclif, the parties most concerned, appear to have taken no part in the argument. Simon Sudbury had been drawn into the affair against his will, and, as Fuller quaintly observes, "acted, rather than was active," in the business. Little came of this synod, only that John Wiclif was commanded from henceforth to forbear writing or preaching his doctrines.

A short time afterwards the Duke of Lancaster again made himself so unpopular, that the Londoners proceeded to open violence, and marched in a body to his palace of the Savoy, threatening vengeance against the princely owner. Fortunately for the Duke, he happened to be away at the time, so the mob were forced to content themselves with ransacking his palace, and plundering all they could lay hands on. The news of the riot soon reached the ears of Bishop Courtenay, who was quietly dining at his palace. It was his enemy's property that was given over to the violence of the mob; the man who had so grossly insulted him was only now receiving his deserts. A worldly and revengeful man would have thus argued, and gloried in his opponent's discomfiture; but Bishop Courtenay, with the generous temper of a Christian man, rose instantly from table, and hastened to the scene of the disturbance. "My people," said he, throwing himself in front of the angry rioters, "how dare ye thus profane the holy season of Lent? I pray you, desist at once from such riotous conduct, lest the vengeance of an insulted God fall upon your heads. Your interests shall be considered—ye have my word for it—only retire now in peace to your homes." The Bishop's manly and generous conduct overcame the rioters, and they retired from the scene of confusion, finding a harmless vent for their revengeful feelings by parading the town with the Duke's arms reversed.

The events I have been relating took place during the last year of Edward III.'s reign. He died in the year 1377. I have shown you that, although in some respects he was inferior to his grandfather, he possessed the happy faculty of being able to attach to his interests the noblest and best men of the time. His character became improved and strengthened under the holy influence of his gentle consort, and the wise and Christian advice of the able statesmen whose counsel he sought. Holinshed, the writer I have before quoted, thus speaks of this redoubted prince—his admiration for Edward's character is *great*, we must therefore make allowance for his somewhat *exaggerated* language; I think, however, on the whole his *testimony is fair*, and the account he gives of Edward's personal

appearance is interesting: "This King, besides his other gifts of nature, was aided greatly by his seemly personage, and had a provident wit, sharp to conceive and understand; he was courteous and gentle, doing all things sagely, and with good consideration; a man of great temperance and sobriety. Those he chiefly advanced to honour and posts of high dignity who excelled in honest conduct, and modesty and innocency of life. Of body well made; of a convenient stature, as neither of the highest nor lowest sort; of face fair and manlike, eyes bright and shining. In age bald; but this was rather a seemliness to those his ancient years, than any disavouring to his visage. In knowledge of martial affairs he was most skilful, as the enterprises and worthy acts by him achieved do sufficiently witness."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RICHARD II.—1377 TO 1381.

OPINIONS OF THE LOLLARDS, WHO PROFESS TO BE FOLLOWERS OF WICLIF—THEY DENY THE NECESSITY OF BISHOPS IN THE CHURCH—THEIR ERRONEOUS OPINIONS WITH REGARD TO OTHER MATTERS—POPULARITY OF THEIR TEACHING—UNSETTLED STATE OF THE NATION AT THE ACCESSION OF RICHARD II.—GENERAL DISCONTENT—THE CONDITION OF THE POOR ON THE LARGER ESTATES IS CHANGED FOR THE WORSE—REBELLION OF WAT TYLER—THE PEOPLE ARE EXCITED TO INSURRECTION BY THEIR LEADERS—SHAMELESS OPINIONS OF JOHN BALL—HE IS HONOURED AS THE PEOPLE'S HERO—FALSITY AND SINFULNESS OF HIS REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES—THE MOB, SWELLED BY HUNDREDS OF PEASANTRY, ADVANCE TO LONDON—ATROCITIES COMMITTED ON THE MARCH—THEY ENCAMP ON BLACKHEATH—PERILOUS POSITION OF THE KING AND HIS NOBLES—SIR JOHN NEWTON DESIRES AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD—THE KING CONSENTS TO SPEAK WITH THE PEOPLE FROM THE RIVER—UNFORTUNATE TERMINATION OF THE DEBATE—THE MOB SEEK THE DUKE OF LANCASTER'S PALACE OF THE SAVOY, AND ADVANCE TOWARDS THE TOWER—THEIR RAGE AGAINST THE PRIMATE—HE IS LEFT A PREY TO THE MOB—HIS AWFUL POSITION—HE CALMLY RESIGNS HIMSELF TO HIS FATE.

It is a mournful fact, that everything good and noble in this world is, to a certain extent, marred by what is evil: without doubt this was the case with regard to that great religious movement of which Wiclif was the leader. Unhappily, his followers were not content to take the same sober view of religious matters as he originally did, but broke into all kinds of heresy and wild fanaticism, bringing odium on their true-hearted and more moderate leader. Wiclif had opened men's eyes to the fact that *certain evils had crept into the Church of England, which needed reform.* He exposed also the gross abuses of the mendicant

system, and resisted the unlawful authority of the Pope. He taught men that the Holy Scriptures are the only sure rule of faith, and encouraged them to study its sacred pages. So far, Wiclif did good ; but the flood-gates once open, it was no easy matter to stem the torrent ; and when people began to exaggerate such opinions, and claim a right wholly to judge for themselves in religious matters, setting at naught the teaching of the Church, the movement became productive of infinite evil.

The followers of Wiclif were called Lollards ; they professed to hold the opinions of their leader, but, unhappily, they greatly exaggerated them. How can we wonder that the rulers of England took alarm at their notions, for they struck at the root both of Church and State ? Among other things, the Lollards asserted that Bishops had no right to exist in God's Church, and that only the two orders of Priests and Deacons were necessary ; while these, they maintained, had power to administer the rights of confirmation and ordination. Now such a notion as this was clearly contrary to Scripture, and to the faith of the universal Church. The Apostles, you know, were the first Bishops we read of, although our blessed Lord Himself may be said to be the first great Apostle, Bishop, and Founder of the Church. He it was who, you remember, set apart His Apostles for their holy office, saying, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you ; and so I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."* Now although, in common with other priests, the Apostles administered the Sacraments, preached, and taught the flock of Christ, and conferred with each other at the councils, *they only could confirm baptized converts, and ordain priests.* This divine system, of which Christ was the founder, was not permitted to die with the Apostles. Before departing to their rest, they laid their hands on other good priests, who succeeded them in the office of Overseer or Bishop. The work of these men, so consecrated, was similar to, and in place of the Apostles.†

"So age by age, and year by year,
God's grace was handed on ;
And still the Holy Church is here,
Although her Lord is gone."

The Episcopal government, therefore, as it is called, or government by Bishops, was the universal system of Christ's Church for more than fifteen hundred years, and until the time of which I am writing was never questioned or opposed. Not content with proclaiming the Pope to be antichrist, these Lollards condemned all Bishops as well ; and because some led

* St. Matthew xxviii. 20 ; St. John xx. 21.

† Canon Wordsworth's Instruction on the Church.

unworthy lives, they urged this as an excuse for condemning the whole order as an innovation in God's Church. Again, they held that the people might use their own reason with regard to the amount of obedience to be paid to their sovereign, and "those who were put in authority under him;" and if their rulers disgraced their profession, they could no longer claim the allegiance of the people. They also declared that it was contrary to Scripture that the clergy should have any temporal possessions, but that they ought to be supported by the voluntary alms of the people; which alms might be withheld if the priest failed in his duty. According to this system, the people, however great their ignorance, might sit in judgment on their parish priest; and if his doctrine or mode of life accorded not with their fancy, his income could at once be withdrawn, and he could be reduced to penury. The followers of Wiclif also condemned all monastic institutions as sinful; and those who took the vows they considered in danger of everlasting death. I have not space here to enumerate all the opinions of these misguided men; but I have said enough to show you that there was quite sufficient in their doctrines to arouse the apprehension and alarm of the government and Church of England. Of the evil of such opinions, there could then be no doubt; while the good that afterwards accrued to religion by the doctrine of Wiclif was as yet unseen and unknown by those who lived at the time. We have therefore no right to blame the Bishops for not being able to see into the future. They acted up to their light; and as it is impossible that we can place ourselves in their position, we ought not to judge harshly of their acts.

Notwithstanding the active steps soon taken by government against the Lollards, their opinions spread like wildfire throughout the kingdom, and especially among the lower orders. Nor was this surprising. There was much in such opinions very acceptable to the pride of the human heart. That the ignorant and uneducated could, in certain cases, withhold obedience from their superiors, and judge for themselves whether or no God's Bishops and priests were worthy of respect, was a liberty of opinion hitherto unknown, and therefore all the sweeter. The lax state of morals among many of the clergy in the monasteries, and their self-indulgent lives, had long since roused the indignation and contempt of the people; and when Wiclif declared that an unworthy priest need claim no respect from his flock, the fire, which had been long smouldering, burst out at last; while many, who were not wise enough to look beyond *the surface*, involved all the priesthood in one sweeping condemnation, confounding the good with the bad. While the

Bishops and clergy were considering what steps they should take with regard to Wiclif and his followers, a formidable insurrection broke out among the lower classes, which for a time threatened to overthrow both Church and State. You have all heard of the rebellion of Wat Tyler, in the reign of Richard II.; but as this popular outburst is closely connected with our history, I must give you a brief account of it. Richard II., the son of the Black Prince, succeeded his grandfather at the early age of twelve years. The condition of the country at his accession was anything but satisfactory. Men's minds were unsettled and discontented. The nation had been heavily taxed during Edward's long reign; while little benefit had accrued to the country from his war with France. Wiclif's opinions were spreading throughout the length and breadth of the land; and we must own that many of them were not calculated to allay the general excitement. At a time when a firm, decided ruler was most needed, a young boy sat upon the throne, who, unhappily, as afterwards proved, was far too easily led by selfish and worldly counsellors. The heavy taxation under which, as I told you, the country had been placed during the reign of Edward III., had been borne by the people with patience, for all shared the glory of the King's conquests, and benefited by the flourishing state of the kingdom. But now all was changed. The foreign possessions were gone. The treasury was exhausted, and universal discontent prevailed. Unhappily, the chief murmuring proceeded from the poorer classes, who, we must own, had sufficient reason for complaint. Their position for some time had been growing worse and worse. We read a great deal of the oppression exercised on the poor in the early days of Old England; but we must remember that while they toiled as serfs for their lord, they could claim food and protection at his hand. Besides this, at certain seasons the gates of the old baronial hall were thrown open for the benefit and pleasure of the serfs on the estate; while the family of the baron made themselves popular by living among their retainers, and at these times joining freely in their amusements. Now, however, things were wholly changed. Many of the larger estates which had once belonged to the old nobility had passed into other hands, and were now owned by rich citizens, who often lived away from their estates, and cared little for the comfort of the labourers who worked on them. Instead of being able to claim the privileges of a serf, the labouring men were *now treated as slaves*; while their selfish masters considered *only what they could extort from them*.*

* Hook's Lives of the Archbishops.

While matters were in this unsatisfactory condition, Archbishop Sudbury, with his usual want of judgment, passed a measure which led to the most disastrous results. Finding that sufficient money could not be obtained from the wealthy to supply the royal coffers, the Parliament in 1380, by the Primate's advice, granted a poll-tax. Every subject, both rich and poor, above the age of fifteen was liable to be taxed. The measure itself was a sufficiently oppressive one, but it was rendered doubly obnoxious by the brutal and unmanly conduct of many of the tax-collectors. That the people had justice on their side there can be no doubt; but we must deplore the measures they took to redress their grievances. The story of Wat Tyler and the tax-collector is related in every English history. The ruffian insulted his only child, and the enraged father avenged the wrong by the death of the offender. The news of the tax-collector's dastardly outrage soon spread from county to county. It was all that was needed to fan the spark into a flame. All England was in a ferment. Hundreds of the peasants flew to arms. We can well pity and excuse the conduct of these misguided men, who imagined they were taking the proper steps to secure justice; but not a word may be said in defence of their worthless and unscrupulous leaders, who led them on to commit all sorts of atrocities; taught them to set at naught the law of the land, and to hate and despise those whom God had placed above them. John Ball, a priest who for some offence had been excommunicated by the Church, joined the ranks of the disaffected, and by his seditious discourses and false reasoning led thousands to set themselves up against all lawful authority, and swell the ranks of the rebels. Unhappily, John Ball was a man of considerable eloquence; and as he professed to be ruled by God's word, the ignorant people, attracted by his honest manner and apparent love of truth, believed all he said, and refused to be swayed by any other counsel. Ball became a popular hero, though in reality he was a cowardly knave, and, under the guise of the friend of the people, he intended to raise himself into popularity on the ruins of their well-being and happiness. By no means an ignorant man, he must have been well aware that the doctrine he preached to the uneducated mob was utterly contrary to God's holy word, and would ruin both the bodies and souls of those who believed it. He who would improve upon the system which God has ordained must indeed be a clever man. Our heavenly Father places both the rich and learned in His Church, that they may be a benefit *and help to their poorer brethren*, who, He has declared, shall "*never cease out of the land.*" John Ball led the people to

believe that all property ought to be equally divided, forgetting that unless talent and genius could also be equally divided, some men would be sure to rise above the rest, although all might start equal in the race. The rich and noble he held up to popular scorn, as idle, useless vagabonds; while he flattered the pride of his hearers by telling them that they were the only "workers" in the hive, and that the nobles, clergy, and lawyers were all of them worthless drones. The poor and ignorant in all ages are easily attracted by plausible words and eloquent language. As long as a speech is pleasant to listen to, they little heed whether it conveys sound truths, or ensnaring falsehoods; but woe be to that leader who meanly takes advantage of such ignorance. All men in God's Church have their appointed work; and because the work of one class is different to the work of the other, we have no right to argue that one is idle and the other industrious. The poor man, it is true, toils with his hands for the rich; but, on the other hand, the noble and learned toil with their brain for the benefit of their poorer brethren. The work of both is honourable for all, in the station in which God has set them to labour for the good of the commonwealth. So that the poor could not do without the rich, nor the rich without the poor. John Ball's words were full of sedition and rancour. On one occasion he took for his text the false proverb at that time so popular:

"When Adam delved,* and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman?"

"My people," he said, addressing the vast multitude who had assembled to listen to the discourse of their popular leader, "ye have been grossly deceived by those who profess to be your protectors; but I would have ye remember yourselves before it be too late. As good husbandmen, who till the ground and rid it of such noxious weeds as would destroy the good corn, I charge ye to root out and destroy, first, the lords of the realm, and after that the clergy, judges, and lawyers, and all other enemies of the commons; that so by despatching out of the way all the great men of the land, there may be equality and liberty; no difference in degree of nobility, but a like dignity and authority in all things." Infuriated by Ball's seditious speeches, the mob, headed by Wat Tyler and Jack Straw, marched towards London, proclaiming vengeance against all who were so unfortunate as to belong to the rank above them. But in the hearts of these rough uncultured boors there yet lingered a feeling of loyalty to the sovereign. "Let us march to London," they

* Dug.

cried; "the King shall be our leader and our head, and to him we will bring our grievances." Very different was their feeling towards the Archbishop. Excited to desperation by their wicked leaders, they regarded him with hatred and abhorrence, for they had been taught to believe that he was the cause of all their troubles.

Sudbury was aware of this; and he knew full well that he, of all men, could never hope for pity from the mob, if once they succeeded in securing his person. As the rebels proceeded on their march, they committed the most revolting atrocities, "killing," we are told, "all the lawyers and justices they could lay hands on, without respect of pity, or remorse of conscience;" alleging, in their mad fury, "that the land could never enjoy her native and true liberty, till all such persons were despatched out of the way." All those who were disposed for more peaceable measures "were threatened by the others, that if they came not, their goods should be spoiled, their houses burnt or cast down, and their heads be struck off when they were taken."*

Under such a system of terror as this, you can well imagine that, by the time the rebels had reached London, their numbers had swelled to an alarming amount; and when many of the soldiers made common cause with them, and even some of the magistrates threw open their gates, matters indeed began to assume a fearful aspect.

On the 12th June the rebels encamped on Blackheath. Their numbers, according to the statement of an eye-witness, then amounted to 60,000 men. The young King, together with the Primate, and several of his lords, were shut up in the Tower, provided with a guard of soldiers utterly inadequate to keep back the surging mass of rebels. To resist was then impossible. The King hastily called together his band of counsellors, to consider what was to be done. At this critical juncture, an emissary from the "Commons," as the insurgents styled themselves, demanded an interview with the King. It was Sir John Newton, governor of Rochester, whom the rebels had compelled, under pain of death, to join their ranks, when the citizens of Rochester opened their gates in welcome to them. "My Lord," exclaimed Sir John Newton, throwing himself on his knees before the King, "I am compelled, on pain of death, to come hither to thee, therefore pardon what I have to say." "Rise," said Richard; "we will take no offence; only deliver thy message, for we are in a sore strait." "My Lord," continued the governor, "*the Commons* entreat you to grant them an in-

* Holinshed.

terview on Blackheath. Ye must come unattended ; but fear not, for they regard your person as sacred, and will respect you as their King. My liege!" he earnestly exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "I do beseech you to grant their request, for they hold my little ones as hostages, and if I return not with a favourable answer they will assuredly be put to death." Richard was but a stripling, but he had a stout heart, and fearlessly replied: "Tell the Commons that on the morrow their King will meet them, and consider their grievances."

The morrow came. Richard, by the advice of his nobles, entered a barge, and rowed slowly along the river to Rotherhithe. Here he encountered a vast concourse of the rioters. Eager to see their King, and to speak with him, the people received him with loud shouts of joy, and pressed to the water's edge to hear his words. "My people," boldly exclaimed Richard, "I come to speak with you, as you desired ; what have you to say?" "We would have the King land," was the loud and instant rejoinder. With an ill-timed, foolish jest, the Earl of Salisbury replied: "It would ill-beseem the King, gentlemen, to grant an interview with such an ill-dressed, ill-conditioned assembly ; ye must needs wait until ye are in a condition to receive him properly." The King's barge was then turned towards the Tower, and as it glided out of sight, and the splash of the oars died away in the distance, angry, ominous groans of disappointment and discontent fell on the King's ear. They were the forerunner of dire scenes of lawlessness and bloodshed. In a state of wild rage and excitement, the mob approached the city. The unpopular Duke of Lancaster was the first object of their revenge. They fired his princely palace of the Savoy, reducing it and all it contained to a heap of ruins. Soon blood was shed ; for the mob had become further excited by the wine that flowed in abundance from the cellars they had ransacked. Men, who had once been honest Englishmen, now became infuriated brutes. In this state the rebel army encamped in front of the Tower, and with loud shouts demanded that the King should come forth. In the hour of his extremity the young King leaned for advice on his counsellors. Their opinions were divided. The nobles, headed by the Earl of Salisbury, advised the King to consent to his people's request, but Archbishop Sudbury counselled otherwise. He foresaw that such a rising as this could only be put down by force, and so he thus addressed the King: "My lord, an ye parley with these rebels, ye do but countenance and confirm them in their misdeeds. My advice is that ye throw yourself on your faithful subjects, who are even now ready to arm in your defence, and

put down this insurrection by force of arms." Sudbury spoke out honestly what he believed to be the truth; and for it he suffered death. The Earl of Salisbury's advice prevailed; and with a brave heart the young King determined to trust to the generosity of his rebel subjects, and meet them face to face. But the news that the hated Primate had endeavoured to hold the King back, and had proposed the severest measures, spread like wildfire through the rebel camp, and "Down with the traitor!" resounded on all sides.

To murder the Primate now became, in their eyes, a lawful and patriotic act; and a chosen band of the insurgents hastened to attack the Tower, where Sudbury still remained, with a few faithful followers, and protected by a handful of soldiers. Meanwhile, the Primate himself, fully alive to the awful position in which he was placed, had spent the long hours of the night, as a true Christian should, in fervent prayer to God in the dimly-lighted chapel. As day dawned, the King, followed by his nobles, entered the sacred building, and received the Holy Communion from the Archbishop's hands. He then stretched forth his arms in solemn benediction. It was the last blessing he ever pronounced. The King and his nobles rose to depart, showing, we must own, a callous indifference for the fate of the noble-hearted priest they left behind. Sudbury heard the clang of the horses' hoofs, as the royal party mounted in the courtyard, and eagerly listened until the last sound of the galloping steeds died away in the distance. Then it was that he fully realised the loneliness and horror of his position. Deserted by his friends, he was left wholly at the mercy of a lawless mass of ruffians who, he knew, eagerly thirsted for his blood. For a moment all was still; then, borne on the summer breeze, came the distant shouts of the populace, as they burst open the massive gates of the Tower, and surged towards the chapel. Every moment the hideous yells became more and more distinct. "Where is the traitor? where is the plunderer of the Commons? turn him out, turn him out, that he may receive the reward of his deeds!" Pale with fear and terror, the faithful attendants of the Primate clung round him, wringing their hands. He, the man who had most cause to tremble, alone stood calm and unmoved. Turning towards the holy altar, he prostrated himself before it, and with the dauntless courage of a true Christian hero, prepared to meet death.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

RICHARD II. *continued.*—1381 to 1384.

CHRISTIAN HEROISM OF SIMON SUDBURY—HIS DREADFUL END—KING RICHARD CONFRONTS THE REBELS ON BLACKHEATH—HIS COURAGE AND PROMPTNESS—WAT TYLER SLAIN—THE INSURRECTION IS TERMINATED BY THE EXECUTION OF THE RINGLEADERS—WICLIF ACCUSED BY SOME OF PARTICIPATING IN THE REBELLION—REASONS FOR BELIEVING SUCH AN ACCUSATION TO BE FALSE—"GOOD QUEEN ANNE"—SHE PUTS A STOP TO THE WHOLESALE EXECUTIONS—RAPID SPREAD OF LOLLARDISM—BISHOP COURTENAY TAKES MEASURES TO STAY ITS PROGRESS—FIRST DAWN OF PERSECUTION—AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT IS PASSED BY WHICH PERSONS ACCUSED OF HERESY MAY BE PUNISHED BY LAW—EXCUSES TO BE MADE FOR THOSE WHO PASSED THE ACT—THE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD AND MANY OTHERS FAVOUR THE OPINIONS OF WICLIF—ARCHBISHOP COURTENAY SENDS DOWN DR. STOKYS TO REFUTE THE HERESY—INTIMIDATION OF DR. STOKYS—HIS IGNOMINIOUS RETREAT—COURTENAY COMPELS DR. RUGGE AND HIS FOLLOWERS TO RECANT—JOHN WICLIF IS SEIZED WITH DEATH WHILE CELEBRATING DIVINE SERVICE IN HIS PARISH CHURCH OF LUTTERWORTH—CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THIS FACT—WICLIF'S DOCTRINES CONSIDERED—HIS ERRONEOUS OPINIONS WITH REGARD TO DIVINE WORSHIP, ETC.—LASTING BENEFIT CONFERRED ON THE CHURCH BY HIS TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES—SOUND VIEWS WITH REGARD TO THE STUDY OF HOLY WRIT—HIS EXCELLENCE AND LEARNING.

THE fine traits of some men's characters seem to lie dormant until a great trial or some dire extremity call them forth. This was the case with Archbishop Sudbury. The beauty of his character, his simple faith in a crucified Lord, his Christian heroism and patient endurance, are not fully revealed to us until that dreadful hour which preceded his murder.

Calm and collected, we left him kneeling in prayer before God's altar, while his attendants, too affrighted even to pray, stood in silent terror, as the mob thundered at the door of the chapel. The chaplain rushed towards it, in the vain hope of preventing the entrance of the murderers. The Archbishop calmly bade him stand back. "Let the servant of God," he said, "depart in peace; my work is done on earth; why should I wish to live, now that I can no longer be of use to any one? Thank God, my mind is happy and tranquil; death has lost all its terrors for me." The Primate had no sooner uttered these words, than the door of the chapel, giving way under the repeated blows of the assailants, fell with a loud crash, and the foremost insurgents, with yells of triumph, rushed into the nave of the church. For a moment they fell backwards, awestruck by the sight that greeted them. Calm and unmoved stood the venerable Primate, grasping in his hand the holy ensign. "Is it *your* Archbishop that ye seek?" he said; "behold he is here. I

am no traitor, no plunderer of the Commons, but your pastor." But the people he addressed were in no mood to listen to reason. Two or three of the rebels now pressed forward, and standing between their victim and the altar, pinioned his hands. Happily, Sudbury was not, like his famous predecessor, Thomas à Becket, slaughtered at the foot of God's holy altar. With shouts of execration his enemies bore him forth from his sacred refuge, and presented him to the assembled people, a doomed and helpless man. The yell of triumph that then rose from the rebel hosts would have struck terror into a stouter heart than Simon Sudbury's; but a strength not his own supported him; and though ghastly pale he calmly addressed the mob. His stern words were not calculated to allay the rage of his enemies. "My children," he said, "take heed what ye do; would ye murder your Primate, your pastor? I pray ye commit not such a crime, lest all England be laid under the curse of an interdict." "We care neither for interdict, nor Pope, nor Prelate," shouted the mob; "but thou art a traitor, and shalt die." A rough block was soon constructed. One of the rioters stepped forward, and with a blunt axe offered to do the bloody work. The Primate knelt down, and with clasped hands entreated the people to fear God and honour the King; and, "O Lord," he murmured, "lay not this deed of blood to the charge of my erring flock." The blunt axe, wielded by an unskilful hand, fell on the Archbishop's neck, only inflicting a slight wound. In his agony he exclaimed, "O my God, this is Thy hand!" The Primate's sufferings must have been dreadful, for not until eight blows had descended on his neck was the work of butchery complete.* Archbishop Sudbury died the death of a Christian hero, and his body lies buried in the Cathedral at Canterbury, near to the spot where the remains of the Saxon martyr Elpege were interred.

While this scene of horror was being enacted in front of the Tower, the young King and his nobles were parleying with Wat Tyler, the leader of the insurrection, on Blackheath. The success of the rioters only increased their effrontery. Wat Tyler, with an insulting air, commanded Sir John Newton, who rode with the King, to get off his horse and stand in his presence. Such an indignity as this was not to be borne. A blow from the mace of the Lord Mayor stretched the braggart on the ground. His followers rushed forward to avenge the death of their leader, and, "bending their bows, made them ready to shoot." "At this critical moment," says the writer I have before quoted, "the King, showing both hardiness and wisdom,

* *Stow's Annals, and Dr. Hook's Lives of the Archbishops.*

more than his age required, set spurs to his horse, and riding in front of the people, exclaimed: 'What is the matter, my men? What mean ye? will ye shoot your King? Be not troubled at the death of a traitor, a ribald. I will be your King, captain, and leader; follow me into the fields, and you shall have all that you desire.'"* Thus Richard, by his presence of mind and cool bravery, succeeded in dispersing the mob; but it was a long time before the insurrection was quelled. At length outward tranquillity was restored; the ringleaders were seized and executed, and the remainder of the rioters pardoned, on condition that they returned quietly to their homes. Many of the nobles would have inflicted summary vengeance on all who had joined in the rebellion; but Richard generously refused to consent to this cruel act, saying, "Many of these men have come hither by compulsion, and not of their own accord, and therefore it might come to pass that those should die that had nothing offended." Unhappily, in this case, as in many others, the faithlessness of Richard soon became apparent. He forgot all his promises, and, listening to ill-advice, permitted hundreds of his innocent subjects to be given over to execution.

Many writers of this period, who were opposed to Wiclif and his opinions, have accused him of participating in the disgraceful scenes I have just described, and of holding correspondence with the rebels. Happily, there is no ground whatever for such an assertion. A learned writer who hates Wiclif thus speaks: "It is clear Wiclif had no hand in those seditions, although his doctrines may have given occasion to them."† I think there is no doubt that the revolutionary opinions of the Lollards paved the way for the rebellion, although the facts of history show us that John Wiclif was too good and moderate a man himself to sanction such violent proceedings. Fuller quaintly remarks, "No wild beast will prey on his own kind;" therefore the vengeance of the mob would not surely have fallen first on Wiclif's friends, John of Gaunt and Simon Sudbury, had the reformer been on their side. We find that all the ringleaders of the insurrection were executed, but Wiclif was allowed to end his days in peace; and although afterwards many articles were urged against him, he was never once accused of abetting the insurrection of Wat Tyler.

After the death of Sudbury, the popular Bishop of London, Courtenay, was chosen Archbishop in his place. His first act was to solemnize the nuptials of Richard with the Lady Anne of Bohemia. This pious and gentle princess exercised a holy

* Holinshed.

† Du Pin's Ecclesiastical History.

influence over her weak husband, and well deserved the title of "good Queen Anne." Her first act showed her to be worthy of such a name. Richard, as I have said, forgot all the fair promises he had made to his poorer subjects, and now sanctioned with brutal indifference the most wholesale executions. Whatever may have been the errors of these unfortunate men, their grievance was a just one. Hundreds of those who suffered were innocent, hard-working men, whose cause had been ruined by worthless leaders; therefore those who disregarded their just claims are worthy of the abhorrence of all honest men. Horrified at the butchery which was going forward, the gentle princess asked for and obtained a general pardon for all who had been persuaded to join the insurrection; and from that hour she was regarded as the friend and protectress of the injured and helpless. It is a relief to find that, at this time, Archbishop Courtenay retained his popularity; therefore there is no reason to suppose that he sanctioned these deeds of bloodshed. Yet one would have been pleased to have heard that, like good Queen Anne, he had openly opposed them.

At this time Wiclif was employing himself in study and meditation. The fickle John of Gaunt was no longer his patron; he had deserted the cause of reform. The Duke was not prepared to suffer ignominy and persecution in the support of principles for which he really cared little, and so he quietly withdrew himself before it was too late. But amidst all opposition, the opinions which the reformer had so boldly advanced were rapidly spreading. I must here briefly allude to the proceedings of the Lollards, and the steps taken by government to inquire into their religious tenets. Up to this time we must own that great moderation had been exercised on the part of the Bishops and clergy. It was now, however, proved beyond all doubt, that many of the Lollards' opinions, if propagated, would prove most dangerous not only to the faith of the Christian Church, but also to the King and government. Archbishop Courtenay therefore considered it his duty to proceed against those who held such opinions, and, if possible, to put a stop to them. Up to this time, if any one offended against the doctrine and discipline of the Church, he was punished by excommunication—which sentence, you remember, deprived the offender of the comforts and privileges of religion. In almost every case this had been sufficient to stop the evil. Now, however, things were changed. The Lollards cared little for the authority of the Bishops, whose very office they denied; while the censures of *the Church* were wholly disregarded by men who considered *they had every right to judge for themselves, and choose from*

the Bible their own religious belief. We must own that Courtenay and the Bishops were involved in an awkward dilemma. They must either permit the Lollards to propagate their seditious and unscriptural opinions, as well as their sound and moderate ones, or they must forbid their preaching altogether on pain of punishment. Under these circumstances, we cannot be surprised that the latter course was the one chosen, although in these days we may object to it as uncharitable, unwise, and bigoted. Finding the censures of the Church of no avail, Archbishop Courtenay in his perplexity appealed to the King to assist him with the law. He urged, and with justice, that many of the opinions held by the Lollards endangered not only the Church, but also the King and government, and therefore it was the duty of the sovereign to interfere; and because disloyalty to the one was as great a sin as disloyalty to the other, both ought to be punished. The arguments of the Primate were not lost upon the King, who proceeded to take steps for silencing the Lollards. In the year 1382, an Act of Parliament was passed, by which any person convicted of heresy could be brought to judgment like any other State offender. We can look back now and see the terrible result of such an enactment as this, and we must deeply regret that it was ever permitted; but after all I have said, you will be able to appreciate the difficulties under which our forefathers laboured. While we condemn the act itself, we have no right to accuse those who passed it of wilful cruelty, because they were unable to scan the future, and see the effect of it themselves. I have already mentioned that the University of Oxford had sheltered Wiclif, and favoured his opinions. The wild youths delighted in the freedom of thought which the Lollards encouraged, and the new doctrines spread rapidly at the University. Archbishop Courtenay became alarmed; and when Dr. Rugge, the Chancellor of the University, proclaimed himself a Wiclifite, the Primate forthwith determined to expose and put a stop to the heresy. Accordingly, he sent Dr. Stokys, a Carmelite monk, to Oxford, who, on a certain day, had orders publicly to read before the whole University the condemnation of Wiclif's doctrines. But the Chancellor and students of Oxford proved too strong for Stokys, who does not appear to have displayed much spirit on the occasion. His wily opponents soon discovered his weakness, and determined to take advantage of it. Feigning true loyalty to the Primate, and reverence for the authority of the Church, Dr. Rugge and a large body of the students assembled themselves on the day appointed to listen to the Doctor's harangue. But Stokys's oratory was by no means palatable; and his Oxford

antagonists had hit upon a clever expedient to cut it short. Just as the Doctor's denunciations were waxing hotter and hotter, and his gestures becoming more and more animated, the ominous clank of swords was heard; and raising his eyes, the affrighted Stokys saw, concealed beneath the gowns of the students, steel coats of polished mail. The Carmelite priest may have excelled in oratory, but certainly not in valour; for when the alarming sight I have just described met his gaze, he scrambled out of his chair, and, trembling from head to foot, expected every moment would be his last; loud shouts of laughter followed the discomfited doctor as he fled from the hall. The harmless stratagem was successful; for neither threats nor promises could ever induce Dr. Stokys to pay another visit to the University. The Archbishop, however, was not the man to be foiled by a jest; and laughing heartily at the cowardice of his monkish emissary, he determined to take the matter into his own hands. He accordingly summoned the Chancellor, Dr. Rugge, and the other leaders of the heresy, to answer before him for their rebellious proceedings. Matters were now assuming a serious aspect. The Chancellor, either overawed by the danger of his position, or convinced by the Primate's arguments, confessed that he had been in the wrong, and throwing himself on his knees before Courtenay, begged for pardon. The usual alternative was then placed before the Chancellor and his companions, "Either you must recant—that is, give up your heretical opinions—or you must submit to the sentence of the law." Dr. Rugge and his friends had evidently not "counted the cost beforehand," when they proclaimed themselves the followers of Wiclif, nor could their religious convictions have been very deep. They were altogether unable to endure the test now brought to bear upon them; and so, after a good deal of discussion, they tendered to the Archbishop a full recantation of their views. Thus, for a time, Courtenay managed to check the further spread of Lollardism at Oxford.

In the year 1384, the great leader of this movement was called to his rest. Wiclif died in the performance of his sacred duties. He was keeping the Festival of the Holy Innocents in his church at Lutterworth; and death came upon him as he knelt at the altar, administering the Holy Eucharist to his parishioners. From this fact two important conclusions may be deduced. First, let those who countenance separation from the Church which God has founded remember that, in the conduct of the reformer Wiclif, no sanction can be found for *such disloyalty*. Though John Wiclif desired to cleanse the *Church of England* from her corruptions, and free her from the

dominion of Rome, he never felt justified in leaving her communion, but remained to the last in union with that Church of which through baptism he had been made a member. Secondly, when you read of the cruel persecution of the Lollards, and the bigotry of their enemies, remember that their leader was permitted not only to end his days in peace, but to retain his benefice to the very last. It is true that Wiclif appears before his death to have modified his views, and to have recalled some of his statements; but still he held a great deal that the Church in those days was not prepared to sanction. We have, therefore, no right to accuse Archbishop Courtenay of taking delight in persecuting and ill-using the reformer and his followers.

A few words more before we finally take leave of John Wiclif. There can be no doubt that, at one period of his life, Wiclif "was carried by his zeal beyond the bounds of truth and soberness."* The opposition he met with from his own countrymen disappointed and grieved him; and, suspected of disloyalty to his Church, he became desperate, and put forth opinions which at one time, I believe, he would have joined with the Bishops in condemning. At this distance of time, it is no easy matter to separate the opinions of the reformer from those of his fanatical followers, more particularly as the writers of the time, who are for the most part bitterly opposed to him, have not taken the trouble to distinguish between them. I think, however, there can be no doubt that in the following respects Wiclif fell away from the true and primitive faith, and so was guilty of error. He appears to have thought that the two offices of Bishop and priest were identical. Such an opinion, I have shown you, was opposed to Scripture and the doctrine of the early Church. Wiclif also thought it contrary to God's law for the Bishops and clergy to possess lands, declaring that they ought to be supported solely by the voluntary offerings of the people. Yet, at the same time, he differed from the Lollards in one important respect. Over and over again he affirms that "Prelates and priests ordained of God are instead of the apostles and disciples;" and that it would be treasonable presumption in the rulers of the land to withhold their alms from the Church. Again: Wiclif certainly allowed his zeal for the truth to carry him too far, when he condemned stated times for Divine worship, and set forms of prayer. He affirmed that good men have no need of forms of devotion, which, he says, "can only abridge the liberty which God has given them." He also objected to church music, and would fain have debarred Christian men from joining *with heart and voice* in the praises of God in his sanctuary.

* Massingberd's History of the Reformation.

“The angels,” he says, “it is true, praise God in heaven; but they have had full victory over their enemies; but we are in the midst of perilous battle, and in the valley of weeping and mourning. Our song keepeth us then from better occupation, and stirreth us to many great sins, and to forget ourselves. Our fleshly people now hath truly more liking in their bodily ears, in such ‘knacking’ and ‘tattering,’ than in hearing of God’s law, or speaking of bliss in heaven.” Very different is the feeling of the inspired Psalmist, when with sublime eloquence he exclaims, “Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet. Praise Him with the psaltery and harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals. Praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.”*

A few words in conclusion with regard to Wiclif. They shall be of praise, and not of censure. John Wiclif conferred a lasting benefit on the Church by his translation of Holy Scripture. It is true that a portion of it had already been put forth in the Anglo-Saxon tongue; but the copies were very scarce, and therefore altogether out of the reach of the people. God’s Holy Word had in consequence become almost unknown until Wiclif translated it, and further preached the necessity of studying it and making it the rule of faith. Although the cost of transcribing the sacred volume was very great, it was soon in such request that copies of it were rapidly multiplied, and became widely spread throughout the land. But though Wiclif encouraged the study of Holy Scripture, he set his face against the presumptuous arrogance which would give to every private man, however ignorant, the right to choose out of the Bible a creed for himself. In exalting the Scriptures as the only safe guide, Wiclif also upheld the Church, as the keeper and expounder of Holy Writ. He thus speaks: “The ground against error is to be established in Christ’s law, and to know what His Church is, and the belief of His Church. What is the subject of belief? It is hidden truth, which God tells us is in His law. It is declared enough in the common creed of Christian men. If you will examine thy faith, whether it be the true faith of Christ’s Church, look whether it is *grounded on any article of the creed; if it be not grounded, take it not as belief.*”

According to the testimony of one of his bitterest enemies, Wiclif was a great philosopher, and a man of eminent learning.† He admired and carefully studied the writings of the “Fathers,” *that is, of the divines of the early Christian Church.* He not

* Psalm cl.

† Knighton.

only translated the Bible, but wrote a great many books besides, which, unhappily, have never come down to us. Had they been preserved, we might have formed a truer and more just opinion of the character of this great and earnest-minded reformer.

CHAPTER XXXV.

RICHARD II. *continued.*—1384 to 1399.

SCHISM IN THE CHURCH OF ROME—TWO POPES FILL THE PAPAL CHAIR AT THE SAME TIME—THIS PUBLIC SCANDAL TENDS TO FAVOUR THE CAUSE OF THE LOLLARDS—PEOPLE BEGIN TO DOUBT THE POPE'S INFALLIBILITY—BONIFACE IX.—HIS UNWORTHY CHARACTER—HE IS THE FIRST TO INTRODUCE THE INDISCRIMINATE SALE OF PLENARY INDULGENCES—STRONG ANTI-PAPAL FEELING IN ENGLAND—THE ACT OF PROVISORS CONFIRMED, AND FURTHER ENACTMENTS MADE AGAINST ROMAN TYRANNY—THE CHARACTER OF RICHARD RUINED BY A BAD EDUCATION—HE GROWS UP A SELFISH AND PROFLIGATE MAN, AND SURROUNDS HIMSELF WITH EVIL COUNSELLORS—HE ESTRANGES HIS BEST AND WISEST NOBLEMEN BY HIS INDIFFERENCE—REMONSTRANCE OF THE LORD CHANCELLOR ARUNDEL—THE KING'S RELUCTANCE TO ATTEND PARLIAMENT—HIS FOOLISH AND UNMANLY THREAT—RICHARD, EARL OF ARUNDEL—HIS NOBLE CHARACTER AND POPULARITY—THE DISAFFECTED LORDS DETERMINE TO BRING RICHARD TO REASON—HIS RAGE AND TREACHEROUS CONDUCT—THOMAS ARUNDEL BECOMES ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—RICHARD DETERMINES TO RUIN BOTH THE BROTHERS ARUNDEL—HIS DUPLICITY—HE GETS RICHARD, EARL OF ARUNDEL, INTO HIS POWER—HIS TRIAL AND EXECUTION—PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION—RICHARD'S UNEASINESS—ARCHBISHOP ARUNDEL BANISHED—HIS GRIEF AND RAGE WHEN HE HEARS OF THE MURDER OF HIS BROTHER—HE LONGS FOR VENGEANCE.

ONE thing at this time especially tended to favour the advance of Wiclif's opinions. Some years before, a most extraordinary division had taken place in the Roman Church. Two popes reigned, each claiming for himself universal supremacy.

Early in the fourteenth century, Pope Clement had thought it advisable to remove his court to Avignon, in France; and there it had continued until the year 1376, when Gregory XI., before his death, considered it necessary for the well-being of his Italian States to return to Rome. At his death, a most violent contest took place between the French and Italians, each claiming the right to elect a new pontiff. The Italians determined to stand their ground, and elected the Archbishop of Beri to the Pontificate, who assumed the title of Urban VI.; while the French, equally eager to assert their rights, elected Robert, Count of Gena, to the papal chair. He took the name of Clement VII. As you may imagine, considerable perplexity

existed in the minds of the faithful which of these two popes was indeed the lawful successor of St. Peter. France, Germany, and Austria, together with Scotland, and several other states, acknowledged Clement; while England, Italy, Bohemia, and Hungary supported Urban's claim. The most shameless deeds of cruelty and wrong were committed by the contending parties; while hundreds began to doubt the infallibility of the Church of Rome, and to look for some surer guide. The mere fact that the Lollards were opposed to the popes made their teaching acceptable to a large number, while what was false and unscriptural in it was overlooked in the general desire for reform.

Matters were not improved when, at the death of Urban, Boniface IX. was elected by the Italians to fill the vacant chair. Had they really desired union, they would surely have come to terms with Pope Clement, who still lived; but the faith of God's holy Church, and the well-being of His people, were to be sacrificed to the aims of worldly and selfish men, who cared little for the harm which they knew must inevitably accrue to the Christian cause by so open and shameless a schism. Boniface IX., an ignorant and worthless man, seems to have been bent only on replenishing his exhausted treasury. In order more effectually to raise money, he resorted to the altogether new and startling plan of proclaiming the indiscriminate sale of plenary indulgences. That is, he offered to any one, who chose to pay for it, a full remission of purgatorial pains, without imposing on them either penance, confession, or a pilgrimage to any holy spot. Those, therefore, who stayed at home could, by paying a certain sum, claim the same privileges as those who had endured a long term of severe penance, or journeyed footsore and weary to some distant shrine.*

Boniface IX. was the first to sanction and encourage this shameless system, which, perhaps, more than anything else, hastened on the Reformation. But though the Pope's emissaries appeared in England, and daily continued their pernicious traffic, the English government was still strongly anti-papal; and Archbishop Courtenay, though he seems to have wavered a little at one time, joined with the rest of his countrymen in passing another decided Act of Parliament against the papal aggression. The statute of provisors, which, you remember, was made in the reign of Edward III., was confirmed; while it was further enacted, "that if any man send or bring within the realm any sentence, summons, or excommunication from the Pope against any person whatever, he shall be taken, arrested, put in prison, forfeit all his possessions and goods for ever, and

* *Dr. Hook's Lives of the Archbishops*, vol. iv., p. 381.

incur the pain of life and of member. And if any prelate abet such proceedings, his temporalities shall be seized, and abide in the King's hands until due redress and correction be thereof made."* I mention this act because it is the most important anti-papal one passed before the reign of Henry VIII., and shows us that the English, as a nation, were becoming less and less disposed to acknowledge the claim of a foreign bishop.

Up to this time, nearly all that you have heard about Richard II. has been favourable. His spirited and wise conduct with regard to the rebels shows us that he lacked neither courage nor presence of mind ; while the patience with which he seemed at first disposed to listen to their demands proves that he possessed considerable tact, and was not wanting in humanity. But King Richard's history affords us a melancholy instance of the way in which a noble character may be marred and ruined by a worldly, irreligious education. Early taught to disregard what was true and noble, and to live only for himself, the young King grew up into a selfish, profligate, and weak man, and surrounding himself with unworthy favourites, soon lost the love and respect of his honest subjects. Richard II. is to be deeply pitied, not blamed. He was elegant in person, refined in his tastes, and, to a certain extent, clever ; but his character was unstable, false, and hollow, and his nobles soon found to their cost that even his most solemn oaths and promises could not be trusted.

It is necessary that I should enter somewhat fully upon the troublous events that now occurred, because they are so closely connected with the ecclesiastics of the time. The nobles whom Richard loved to gather around him were mostly unprincipled and unpatriotic men, while those of his lords who would fain have given him good advice, and supported his lawful authority, were shunned by him and regarded with suspicion. Richard, absorbed in his own selfish enjoyments, cared little or nothing for his country, and even considered it a trouble to appear in person to consult with his nobles in parliament. Thomas Arundel, Bishop of Ely and Lord Chancellor, remonstrated with Richard on his culpable indifference. "You have, sire," said he, "been absent for a long space of time, and yet you still refuse to come among us, greatly to the hindrance of your parliament." Richard at length reluctantly consented to attend ; but he had far better have kept away, for his childish and unwise words were by no means calculated to conciliate his offended nobles. His speech shows an utter want of tact and *right feeling*. "Our people and commons," he exclaimed, "go *about to rise against us* ; therefore we think we cannot do better

* Collier, vol. iii., p. 204.

than to ask aid of our cousin, the French King, and rather submit us unto him than to our own subjects."* Nothing could well have been more unpalatable to English ears. The nobles soon began to debate among themselves whether it would not be advisable to compel the King to dismiss his evil counsellors and to abide by the law of the land.

Among the nobles who took a prominent part in this matter were Henry of Hereford, son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and Richard, Earl of Arundel, brother of the Lord Chancellor. The Earl of Arundel was one of the wealthiest and most powerful of the English nobles, and by his princely liberality and courtly manners "had won," we are told, "the hearts and goodwill of the people, whose friendship he purchased by gifts and good deeds."† From early childhood the two brothers, Richard and Thomas, had been devotedly attached to each other. The stately Castle of Arundel, covered with mantling ivy, still looks down, from its commanding position, on the fertile Sussex plains, bounded by the blue waters of the English Channel. If ever you pay a visit to this lordly mansion, you will think of those two noble brothers who played their part in English history, and who frolicked as children amid the wooded slopes which surround it. Time will not permit me to enter upon the various ways in which Richard irritated and goaded on his nobles to rebellion. The result, however, was, that finding remonstrance of no avail, they prepared to enforce their arguments by taking up arms. The cause, which had for its leaders the popular Henry of Lancaster and the generous Richard of Arundel, was regarded by the people as the cause of justice, and some of the better-minded of Richard's counsellors wisely advised him to adopt conciliatory measures towards the offended lords. "My liege," said the Duke of Northumberland, "these lords, who are now in the field, have ever been your true and faithful subjects, and yet are so; for even now they intend to attempt nothing against your state, wealth, and honour. I therefore counsel you to hold parley with them, that they may have opportunity of stating their grievances." Richard consented to meet his nobles; but, with cowardly treachery, placed in concealment a body of armed men, with the intention of intimidating the noble-minded and unsuspecting patriots. At the appointed hour, the false King arrived at the place of meeting, but was surprised to find that the Lord Chancellor Arundel was the only nobleman present. Thomas Arundel had discovered the plot, and now boldly taxed Richard with his want of faith. Pale with rage, Richard

* *Holinshed.*

† *Ibid.*

angrily demanded why the lords had not made their appearance? The Chancellor's reply was a bold and honest one: "Marry, we know full well," said he, "that there is near this spot an ambush of a thousand armed men concealed contrary to covenant, and therefore the lords neither come nor hold you faithful of your word." The Chancellor, however, was not a man to stir up strife, and he did his best to mediate between the King and his earls. They at length consented to meet their sovereign, but wisely took the precaution of coming fully armed into his presence. Richard was furious. "Rebels," he exclaimed, "will ye dare take up arms in my presence?" Without losing their temper, the nobles calmly but firmly replied: "We are not rebels; but we come together for the good of the realm and to compel our sovereign to discard his evil counsellors." Richard struggled for utterance, for rage well-nigh choked him. "By what means, and by what reason durst ye so presumptuously take upon ye, within this my realm, to rise against me? Did ye think to fear me by such presumptuous boldness? Have I not armed men sufficient to have beaten ye down, compassed about as ye were, like wretched deer in a toil? Marry, in this behalf I make no more account of ye than the vilest scullions in my kitchen."* From that hour, the breach between Richard and his patriot earls became hopelessly widened. Their mutual hatred and distrust were now no longer concealed, and events soon occurred which brought matters to a climax, and ended in the dethronement of the false and unreasonable monarch.

Archbishop Courtenay died in the year 1396. Though a man of noble birth, he was singularly free from pride, and retained his popularity to the last. His successor in the primacy was Thomas Arundel, the Lord Chancellor, who had already been elevated to the See of York. But Arundel was not long permitted to hold his office in peace. Although, a short time back, Richard had professed to pardon his nobles, it is evident he had pretended to forgive, while he was still treasuring up in his heart thoughts of vengeance. The two brothers, Thomas and Richard Arundel, were the first victims of his displeasure. In a parliament held in the year 1397, the pardons which had been granted to the Duke of Gloucester, the King's uncle, and to the Earls of Arundel and Warwick, were made void, and Thomas Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was impeached for high treason. Startled by the suddenness of the *accusation*, Arundel rose to defend himself, and begged the *King to grant* him a hearing. But Richard had laid his own

* Holinshed.

schemes, and was determined to carry them out, even at the sacrifice of his own honour and kingly word. He rose and commanded the Primate to be silent, promising him that all should be well. The King's object at this time was to keep the Archbishop out of the way; and so he constrained him to remain in retirement at his palace at Lambeth, while he carried out his treacherous and unmanly scheme of vengeance against the Primate's brother. Richard, Earl of Arundel, had spent a long life of active usefulness. He had served his country as a statesman; he had bravely fought her battles; and now he had retired to the beloved home of his boyhood, there to end his days in peace. But Richard had determined on his ruin, and planned it with consummate treachery. Shut up in his stronghold of Arundel, and surrounded by retainers, who regarded him more as their father than their lord, Richard knew it would be a work of impossibility to seize the Earl by force. He therefore resorted to a most unmanly stratagem. Richard went to the Archbishop, and told him that he desired to hold conference with his brother. Arundel hesitated to send the message. Already he had had proof of the King's treachery, and his brother was very dear to him. Then Richard swore, with a solemn oath, that the Earl should come and go in perfect safety, and return to his castle unharmed. Arundel was satisfied, and his brother came. The two brothers spent the evening together in loving converse, and the next morning proceeded to Westminster, where Richard was. They parted never to meet again. Through the long weary hours of that day the Primate waited and waited for his brother; and when night closed in and Richard came not, he rowed back to Lambeth, his heart weighed down with grief and apprehension. The Earl's doom was sealed. Generous and open to a fault, he came into the King's presence totally unprepared for treachery. His sovereign's word had been given, and he considered himself safe. Alas! it was far otherwise. Surrounded by enemies, who arraigned him for high treason, he nobly pleaded before his false sovereign for life. But his manly defence fell on deaf ears. Sir John Bushey rose, and addressing the King, said: "My lord, your faithful commons require that judgment may be had against this traitor Earl." Boiling with honest indignation at this hypocritical speech, the Earl turned a withering look on the speaker, and calmly answered: "Not the King's faithful subjects require this, but thou, and whom thou art, I know." The examination soon terminated. Richard, Earl of Arundel, was hurried to execution. *No time was to be lost; for had not the people been paralyzed by the suddenness of the event, they would have flown to arms*

to rescue their beloved hero. As it was, loud groans and hisses of dissatisfaction greeted the soldiers as they conducted the Earl to the place of execution on Tower Hill. He suffered as a true-hearted soldier, and, commending his soul to God, he laid his head on the block, and died without a murmur.

The writer I have before quoted thus speaks of this noble-hearted Englishman: "The death of the Earl of Arundel was much lamented among the people. Among all the nobles of the land there was none more esteemed. So noble and valiant he was, that all men spoke honourably of him."*

The man who commits an unholy, treacherous deed seldom finds peace. After the death of the Earl, Richard was haunted by the most horrible dreams. He knew that numbers of his subjects flocked daily to the tomb of the murdered man; and, alarmed by the stings of conscience, he began to give credit to the report that the Earl's head had been miraculously united to his body. He therefore ordered the grave to be opened, and the tomb to be destroyed.

While these events were taking place, Archbishop Arundel had been safely conveyed out of the way. He was an exile when the dreadful news of his brother's murder reached him. From that hour he was an altered man. His own wrongs were all forgotten in the overwhelming desire to avenge the death of the man he loved best in the whole world. With hands tightly clasped, and quivering lips, he paced up and down the apartment, trying to bring before his mind the last dreadful scene on Tower Hill. Then the joyous days of boyhood, never to be recalled, rose up before him. His thoughts wandered to the grassy slopes of Arundel, where with his beloved brother he had whiled away the happy hours in innocent sport. Then he recalled to mind the time when, as youths, they had walked up and down the stately avenues, planning for the welfare of their tenantry, or laying schemes of future glory and fame. Then the last dread scene of all—the generous hero doomed to die a traitor's death! It was too much. Thomas Arundel was not more than mortal. He hated the man who had been the cause of all this misery, and from that hour planned his overthrow.

* Holinshed.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HENRY IV.—1399.

RICHARD BANISHES HENRY OF HEREFORD, SON OF THE DUKE OF LANCASTER—POPULARITY OF HENRY—GRIEF OF THE PEOPLE AT HIS DEPARTURE—HENRY, WHILE IN EXILE, RECEIVES THE NEWS OF THE DEATHS OF HIS FATHER AND UNCLE, AND THAT RICHARD HAD SEIZED ALL HIS POSSESSIONS—ARCHBISHOP ARUNDEL'S LETTER TO HENRY—THE TWO FRIENDS MEET—ARUNDEL URGES HENRY TO HEAD THE DISAFFECTED NOBLES—HIS RELUCTANCE—HE AT LENGTH CONSENTS—ARUNDEL AND HENRY LAND AT RAVENSPUR, IN YORKSHIRE—HUNDREDS FLOCK TO THEIR STANDARD—RICHARD'S COUNSELLORS FLY TO BRISTOL—THE DUKE OF LANCASTER BESIEGES THE CITY, AND PUTS SIR JOHN BUSHEY AND THE OTHER NOBLES TO DEATH—RICHARD'S FOLLY AND TREACHERY—HE IS TAKEN PRISONER BY HENRY, AND COMPELLED TO RIDE IN HIS TRAIN—TRIUMPHANT ENTRY OF HENRY INTO LONDON—ENTHUSIASM OF THE PEOPLE—ARGUMENTS BY WHICH THE REBEL PARTY JUSTIFIED THEIR ACTS—INTERVIEW BETWEEN ARCHBISHOP ARUNDEL AND RICHARD—ARUNDEL'S RAGE—HENRY OF LANCASTER IS CROWNED KING OF ENGLAND, BUT DOES NOT FIND PEACE OF MIND—INSURRECTION IN THE NORTH—BOLDNESS OF THE BISHOP OF CARLISLE—HIS SPEECH—HE IS CONVICTED OF HIGH TREASON—HIS DEATH—MURDER OF RICHARD II. IN PONTEFRAC T CASTLE.

FROM this time Richard's course was one of headlong folly and blindness. In a fit of jealous anger he now banished Henry of Hereford, the son of John of Gaunt, from the kingdom. But while he was thus endeavouring to get rid of all his enemies, he was but hastening on his own destruction. Henry of Hereford was then in all the vigour of youth, full of ardour and enterprise. He was as popular as his father was unpopular; and as Richard became more hated and distrusted, Henry of Hereford, his cousin, became daily more beloved, until, at the time of which I am now speaking, he was regarded as the idol of the English nation. With a heavy heart he prepared to leave his native land. The people fully shared his feelings. Holinshed tells us that "in every town and street where he came, numbers of people ran after him, before he took the sea, lamenting and bewailing his departure, exclaiming that, when he had departed, the only shield, defence, and comfort of the commonwealth would be faded and gone."* The fact that by the King's mandate their favourite hero was now a forlorn exile greatly increased the people's indignation against Richard. While abroad, the news reached Henry that his father, the famous John of Gaunt, was dead, and that the false King had seized all the possessions that of lawful right now belonged to his heir. He also heard that his uncle the Duke of Gloucester was no more. His disappearance was sudden and mysterious, and it was darkly hinted

* Holinshed.

that Richard had secretly ordered him to be strangled. Be that as it may, we cannot wonder that at the time people readily gave heed to this horrible rumour. Matters were now approaching a climax. From all I have read of Henry's character, I do not believe that, in the first instance, he had any treasonable intentions whatever against Richard; and had the King acted with ordinary honesty and judgment, I think it not unlikely he would to the last have continued a faithful servant of the crown. Henry was not an ambitious man; but he lacked that strength of character and high principle which would have enabled some men to resist the overwhelming temptations which now assailed him. Driven to desperation by the unjust treatment he had received at the hands of his faithless cousin, and regarded by the people as their natural protector, can we be surprised that when a still stronger temptation assailed him, he succumbed to it, and became an usurper? While Henry was chafing uneasily at his hard fate, Archbishop Arundel was passionately lamenting his brother's unjust execution. The same sense of wrong rankled in the hearts of both these great men; and it was owing to Richard's folly that they now came together. Without doubt, Arundel's designs were rebellious and unlawful. God has said, "Vengeance is mine: I will repay;" and had he patiently endured like a Christian man the trials now sent upon him, I doubt not that God, in His own good time, would have made his "just dealing as clear as the noontide," and given him satisfaction. But human nature is weak; and to a restless and energetic character like the Primate's, waiting is worse than death. I would not countenance the future proceedings of Henry of Hereford and his friend Arundel, or say that their cause was either a righteous or a lawful one; but I do maintain that they had both received grievous and unwonted provocation. While Henry was meditating on the fresh outrages committed by Richard, a letter reached him from Archbishop Arundel. Very little more was required to bring matters to a crisis. "My lord," says the Primate, "your relations of the royal blood, and the rest of the English nobility, are deeply afflicted at the sense of their country's misfortunes. The oppressions are of the heaviest kind, and have been of long continuance. Neither life nor fortune is secure. The constitution is wholly overborne by the arbitrary sway of court favourites. The kingdom is in the lowest state of degradation, and miserably impoverished. The case is desperate. An extreme remedy is necessary. The nobles can think of no other expedient to relieve the kingdom, *than by setting another man at the helm.* As for the King, he *bath* neither capacity, nor any other quality for the post. A

station of such importance requires a person of the greatest experience, probity, and temper to manage it. After careful deliberation, the nobles and commons have made choice of you, the Duke of Lancaster, for so great an undertaking." "You, my lord," he continued, "are the only person that can break our chains, and retrieve our constitution. It is from you only that we can expect to be rescued from the arbitrary conduct of a weak and dissolute prince, from the pride and avarice of an intolerable ministry, who govern their master, and abuse his authority at pleasure. We can be patient and passive no longer. We hope, therefore, my lord, you will neither be surprised at the application, nor refuse your assistance. For what can be more serviceable to your honour, and convey your name with more advantage to posterity than to interpose for the miserable, and restore the happiness of your country? Let not the difficulty of the enterprise make you distrust the success; for you will certainly find that the quality and bulk of the nation are ready to concur with you and second the attempt. Indeed, the whole body of the English are heartily disposed to venture their lives and fortunes in this bottom; so that you are likely to meet with no opposition, unless it be from a few desperate courtiers generally hated. Finally, since all things are thus happily disposed, since honour and interest have given you so strong an invitation, we hope you will not refuse the offer, nor be wanting to your country, which must, as you are pleased to determine, either recover, or be wholly lost."*

While Henry was musing over the Archbishop's arguments, Arundel appeared in person to confirm all he had said in his letter. A great deal had happened since the two friends last met, and they had much to talk over; but the wrongs that both had suffered were the chief topic of conversation. With all the eloquence and fervour of which he was capable, Archbishop Arundel urged Henry again and again to place himself at the head of the disaffected nobles, who, he said, were eagerly waiting for his consent to arm. Surely no man was more sorely tempted than Henry. Struggling in vain to subdue his violent agitation, he paced rapidly up and down the apartment; and, throwing the window wide open, he gazed down on the lovely garden beneath him; while the soft summer breeze, as it gently fanned his fevered brow, seemed to calm and soothe him. "Yes, indeed," he murmured, half speaking to himself, "I would rather wish to spend the course of my years in this obscure yet certain state, than to throw myself upon the pikes of those perils, which *being once entered into* are dangerous to follow, and deadly to

* Collier, vol. iii., p. 232.

forsake. For in private attempts a man may step and stop where he pleases; but he that aimeth at a kingdom hath no middle course between the life of a prince or the death of a traitor.”*

Without appearing to heed Henry's soliloquy, Arundel again urged him to declare himself his country's deliverer. For a long time Henry wavered. He was by no means eager to seize the tempting bait; but at length the Primate's arguments prevailed, and from that hour Thomas Arundel and Henry of Hereford swore to carry out their designs, even unto death. They believed their cause to be a lawful and a righteous one, and the people of England acted as if they thought so too. When Henry, accompanied by the Primate and the son of the murdered Earl of Arundel, landed at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, hundreds flocked to his standard, all ready to show their devotion to the hero who had come to strike off their chains. Henry's movements were rapid and decisive. Richard's counsellors, finding themselves deserted by the people, quitted their posts, and fled to Bristol. The Duke of Lancaster appeared before the walls of the city, and taking the castle by storm, seized Sir John Bushey (who, you remember, had accused the Earl of Arundel before the King), and beheaded him without trial, together with several others of the fugitive nobles. Richard was in a great strait. He endeavoured to rally his people round him, but all in vain. Neither threats nor promises prevailed anything; for we are told, “there was not a man who would willingly thrust out an arrow against the Duke of Lancaster.”† He had won their hearts, but Richard was hated and despised. It was useless to resist. His kingdom had slipped through his hands, and the only course now left open to him was to submit. Possibly, Richard's fate might yet have been averted, had not his own duplicity and folly again stood in his way. Moderate proposals had been tendered to him from the Duke and his party; but when a speech which Richard uttered in secret was repeated to Henry of Lancaster, he no longer scrupled to claim the crown, and make the false King his prisoner. “Things are now desperate,” muttered Richard; “but I swear that whatever assurances I may give to this man, he shall die. I will enter into secret correspondence with the Welsh; through them I shall regain my power; and that regained, in any way, death shall be the reward of Henry and his partizans. Some there are whom I will flay alive. Not all the gold in the land will I take for *them*, if I continue alive and well.” Richard's threats were

* Hayward's Life of Henry IV.

† Holinshed.

never put into execution ; for the next day he was a prisoner in the hands of Henry of Lancaster. The now fallen and despised monarch rode in the train of the conqueror, an unwilling witness to the enthusiastic demonstrations of joy which greeted Henry as he passed along. "In every town and village where he came, we read that children rejoiced, women clapped their hands, and men cried out for joy."* The cold looks of indifference and contempt which fell to the share of the captive King must have contrasted most painfully with the shouts of joy which greeted his enemy. We cannot withhold our pity from the fallen man. An old writer says : "Richard's faults were more to be imputed to the frailty of wanton youth, than to the malice of his heart." This may be all very true ; but the effects produced on the country were as fatal as if Richard had sinned in every case wantonly and wilfully. Wise and good counsellors were not wanting to him, but he set his face against them, preferring to surround himself with worthless and profligate flatterers, who led him on to ruin. You will acknowledge the justice with which a writer of the time remarks : "It is as dangerous to a prince to have evil and odious adherents, as to be evil and odious himself."† Richard, by his selfishness and folly, had rendered himself obnoxious both to rich and poor ; and therefore it is not surprising that Henry and his followers considered themselves patriots, and imagined the end justified the means. The writer Holinshed, whose words I have so often quoted, gives us their arguments, which certainly appear reasonable. "Perceiving that neither law, justice, nor equity could take place when the King's wilful will was bent upon any wrongful purpose, they considered that the glory and the public wealth of the country must decay, by reason of the King's lack of wit, and want of such as should without flattery admonish him of his duty. And therefore they considered it best to leave such an unadvised captain, who, with a leaden sword, would cut his own throat."‡ Richard's humiliation was complete ; and before he handed over the crown of England to his cousin, he had to listen to the passionate reproaches of Archbishop Arundel, who had not yet forgotten nor forgiven the murder of his brother on Tower Hill. Richard cowered like a frightened child before the indignant Primate. His voice trembling with rage, Arundel exclaimed : "False King ! I swear by St. Thomas of Canterbury that thou didst solemnly promise me that my brother should receive no harm. I brought him into thy presence, and never did I see him again. Not content with this, thou hast robbed thy nation,

* *Holinshed.*† *Hayward's Life and Reign of King Henry IV.*‡ *Holinshed.*

thou hast promoted the vilest of the people to be thy counsellors. Thou hast doomed to death thy relations. Thou art a tyrant, and thy decrees shall not be set at nought. By thy base example thou hast defiled thy court and thy country, and—" The enraged Archbishop would have proceeded further, had not Richard interrupted him. "It is enough, it is enough," he faltered; "am I not ready to resign my crown?"

On the 13th October, 1399, Henry of Hereford was crowned King of England. The Primate was the chief actor in this scene of public rejoicing. But Henry had to pay dearly for the honour for which he had staked everything. He was no longer the light-hearted, generous-tempered man he had been. The royal crown sat heavy on his head; nor could even the Archbishop's magnificent homily, justifying the step he had taken, make him feel that he had acted the part of a true and loyal Christian man. Archbishop Arundel remained his friend to the last; but there were some who refused to transfer their homage to their new king. One of them was Thomas Merks, Bishop of Carlisle. When nearly all England was rejoicing in the accession of Henry of Lancaster, the Bishop had the courage publicly to declare himself on the side of the dethroned monarch. Gathering his people together, he boldly proclaimed his opinions, which he knew full well would be regarded by the government as highly treasonable. A writer of the time gives us the whole of his eloquent speech. I will quote a short passage from it, that you may judge of the remainder. After bringing forward a great many instances from sacred and ancient history to prove that England had been guilty of sinful disloyalty to her rightful sovereign, he thus concludes: "Henry of Hereford hath not only violated his oath, but with impious arms disturbed the quiet of the land, dispossessed the King from his royal estate, and now demandeth judgment against his person without offence proved nor defence heard. If this injury and this perjury doth nothing move us, yet let both our present and common dangers somewhat withdraw us from their violent proceedings."*

One cannot but admire the spirit with which this bold man clung to a ruined cause. Not content with proclaiming his opinion, he joined with some of the disaffected nobles (who imagined they had not received as much benefit as they expected from the revolution), and endeavoured to raise an army to reinstate King Richard on the throne. Merks was seized, and *arraigned* for high treason. While Henry was in sore *perplexity* how to treat this rebel ecclesiastic, who was greatly be-

* Hayward.

loved by his people, the Pope stepped in and helped him out of his dilemma. He proposed that the Bishop should be honourably got rid of by being translated to the Bishopric of Samos, in Greece. But, as Fuller remarks, "Before his translation was completed, he was translated to another world."*

The last days of the unfortunate Richard are involved in great obscurity. The writers of the time, although they agree in thinking he died a violent death, differ as to the mode in which he suffered. I think the account given us by Thomas Walsingham, a monk of the time, is most likely to be the true one.† One day, Henry was more than usually disturbed and irritated by the news that insurrections were ready to burst out all over the land. Richard, now that he was deposed and imprisoned, excited the sympathy and compassion of the fickle people, who forgot all his faults in his misfortunes. As Henry paced uneasily up and down the room, the door opened, and Piers Exton, a knight, softly entered. "Have I then," murmured the King, "no faithful friend who will deliver me of him whose life will be my death, and whose death would be the preservation of my life?" The fatal words were but too easily interpreted. Piers Exton withdrew, and with a guard of armed men proceeded to Pontefract Castle, where the unfortunate Richard was confined. The assassins rudely entered the King's presence. Their drawn swords and mailed armour bespoke too truly their bloody errand. But Richard sold his life dearly. All the old fire of his nature returned; and with dauntless courage he prepared to face the eight armed ruffians, his only weapon a three-legged stool. It was a cruel and unequal combat. But the brave man slew four of the assassins before he was himself overcome. The brutal Piers Exton was his murderer. By a cowardly manœuvre he contrived to get behind Richard, and with one blow of a poleaxe laid him dead at his feet.

* Fuller, vol. i., p. 472.

† Collier appears to think that Walsingham believed Richard to have died by starvation; but Holinshed attributes the account I have here given of Richard's murder to the learned monk. I have chosen Holinshed's opinion in preference to Collier's, because he lived nearer the time, and therefore his testimony is most likely the correct one.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HENRY IV. *continued.*—1399 to 1404.

ARCHBISHOP ARUNDEL, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE KING, PASSES A LAW, BY WHICH ANY ONE CONVICTED OF HERESY MIGHT BE CONDEMNED TO DEATH—SUCH A LAW CLEARLY CONTRARY TO SCRIPTURE AND THE CUSTOM OF THE EARLY CHURCH—WILLIAM SAWTRE—HE IS CONVICTED OF HERESY, AND CONDEMNED TO BE BURNT—THE LOLLARDS FALL INTO FURTHER EXTREMES—ERRONEOUS VIEWS WITH REGARD TO DIVINE WORSHIP, HOLY MATRIMONY, AND THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY—THE LOLLARDS INTERFERE IN POLITICS—GROWING AVERSION TOWARDS THE BISHOPS AND CLERGY—SPIRITED CONDUCT OF ARCHBISHOP ARUNDEL—THE COMMONS PROPOSE THAT THE KING SHOULD APPROPRIATE THE REVENUES OF THE CHURCH—ARUNDEL MANFULLY DEFENDS THE CAUSE OF THE CLERGY—THE SCHEME OF THE COMMONS FOILED FOR A TIME—THE LORDS PROMISE THE PRIMATE THAT THEY WILL PROTECT THE CHURCH FROM SPOLIATION.

As soon as Archbishop Arundel was reinstated in the Primacy, he began in earnest to set about the work of his diocese. The Lollards were daily becoming more popular; and as in many of their opinions they were drifting still further away from the true faith, Arundel considered it his duty to do all in his power to repress them. Although we cannot be surprised that the Primate should have taken alarm, we must deeply deplore the means he adopted, in conjunction with the King, to put a stop to the evil. Henry IV. was the first sovereign of England who permitted heretics, as they were called, to be punished by death, unless they consented to recant or give up their opinions. In the year 1400 an Act of Parliament was passed, by which those who obstinately held opinions contrary to the Church of England might be delivered over to the secular judge, who had power to condemn the offender to be burnt to death. Now, although we have fully seen the difficulties under which, at this period, our ancestors laboured, and that many excuses are to be made for them, I am sure that no defence can be urged for such a sanguinary law as this. Neither God's word, nor the custom of the early Church, sanction such extreme persecution for the sake of religion. You remember how our Lord rebuked the Apostles St. James and St. John, when they would have called down the vengeance of heaven on those who refused to listen to His Divine words. "Ye know not," he says, "what spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."* Surely then His followers, who preach His *gospel*, which proclaims "peace on earth, good-will towards men," ought to follow their Divine Master in this respect. The

* St. Luke ix. 55, 56.

servants of the householder were indignant to see tares growing up amongst their master's wheat, and would fain, in their zealous haste, have rooted them up. But their Lord's answer was, "Nay, lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them: let both grow together until the harvest; and in time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."* No mortal, nor even angel, dare give the word of command; it belonged of right only to the Son of God. Full of wisdom were the words of Gamaliel: would that our Church had always acted in his spirit. He addresses those Jews who, in their blind fury, would have slain Christ's holy Apostles: "Ye men of Israel, I say unto you, refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but, if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."† Nor can we find that the Bishops of the early Church ever punished heresy by death. Christian Bishops, it is true, in those early ages, stedfastly set their faces against what was false and unscriptural, and, acting upon St. Paul's advice, "marked those which caused divisions, and avoided them." Such offenders they excommunicated—that is, deprived them of their religious privileges; but they would have shrunk from condemning them to death. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, one of the holiest and best fathers of the Church, refused to communicate with those who had sentenced a heretic to death; and we find that most of the Bishops contemporary with St. Ambrose agreed with him in this matter. For, as the learned writer who is my authority for this statement says, "This roasting men into orthodoxy, and enlightening them with fire and faggot, was a discipline not understood in those early ages."‡ In this respect, therefore, it is clear that our forefathers were in error. But one thing I would have you guard against. Many who have been satisfied with a one-sided view of the case have stated that the clergy alone were the authors of this abominable law. Such is not the case. The record states that not only the clergy, but also the Lords Temporal, as well as Spiritual, the Commons in Parliament assembled, and the King, all giving their assent."§

The first victim of this most unhappy enactment was William Sawtre, parish priest of St. Osyth, in London. He was accused of holding heretical opinions with regard to the Holy Com-

* Matthew xxiii. 29, 30.

† Acts v. 38, 39.

‡ Collier, vol. iii., p. 258.

§ Dr. Hook's *Lives of the Archbishops*, vol. iv., p. 501.

munion and other points, and at first appears to have satisfied his accusers by explaining away, if not recanting his opinions. But doubts being again entertained of his orthodoxy (or sound views of religion), he was summoned before Archbishop Arundel, and required fully to state his opinions. The doctrine of the Holy Eucharist is involved in such deep mystery, and ought ever to be approached with such reverent awe, that one shrinks from the apparently careless way in which the subject was handled at these examinations. Perhaps on no point ought Christian charity to be more carefully exercised; and yet we find that in all ages this most blessed and life-giving mystery has been the cause of endless contention, and, by Satan's agency, has been made the means whereby many innocent people have suffered death. Surely the enemy of our souls loves most to ensnare us through our holiest things. From all accounts, Sawtre appears to have held less extreme opinions than many of the Lollards. He certainly used words different from those which the Archbishop would have made use of in explaining his belief with regard to the Holy Eucharist, but in spirit I do believe that they were not so widely separated. It is therefore the more to be regretted that Archbishop Arundel, in his zeal for what he believed to be the truth, altogether overlooked the necessity of showing Christian charity. Sawtre's explanation, with regard to this point, was not considered satisfactory; and, as he still refused to use the exact words required by Arundel, he was declared a heretic, and handed over to the secular magistrate, who condemned him to suffer death by burning. The horrible sentence was duly carried into effect. Sawtre suffered as a Christian martyr should do, with constancy and calmness. As the flames shot up higher into the air, shutting out the writhing form of the martyr priest, those who stood by must have turned with horror from the new and appalling spectacle. It was a searching test for the sincerity of Wiclif's followers; a test which the mere outward believer and dissembler could never endure. We must therefore conclude that all who now openly professed themselves Lollards were brave, honest-minded men, though on some points they may have erred. This law, which Archbishop Arundel had hoped might have somewhat lessened the difficulty under which the government laboured with regard to the Lollards, only served to increase it. As is usually the case with those who dissent from the faith of the Christian Church in less important matters, their errors grow, *instead of diminishing*. The Lollards now put forth opinions *which all must own* were calculated to inspire both the rulers of the Church and the government with serious alarm. Among

other things, they actually asserted that the "parish church is no better than the synagogue of Satan;" and for this reason they declined going thither, either to say their prayers, or to receive the Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of the altar, which, as they blasphemously expressed themselves, was no better than a morsel without life or significancy, and the very top and pinnacle of Antichrist. The views of the Lollards with regard to holy matrimony were equally heretical. They declared that if a man and woman mutually agreed to live together, the holy rite of matrimony—the blessing which God Almighty freely bestows on the couple who kneel in prayer before His altar—was not necessary, and little better than an idle superstition. While the Bishops of our Church at this time have been freely accused of disregarding the Lord's Day, I never remember to have heard the followers of Wiclif blamed for not showing proper reverence for it. There is no doubt, however, that at this time they set at naught even this holy day, and, in common with the other festivals of the Church, condemned its observance. In avoiding one extreme, therefore, they fell into another equally hurtful. "No festival of the Church," say they, "ought to be kept holy or particularly regarded, *not even the Lord's Day*; for a man may take the liberty to eat, drink, and work upon one day as well as another."*

To make matters worse, the Lollards interfered more and more in political matters, and by disloyalty to the King and government became as obnoxious to the State as they were to the Church. But the more they were hunted down and oppressed the more they gained ground; and hundreds who would have disowned the name of "Lollard" were yet influenced by their opinions. Nothing shows this more than the growing indifference, and even dislike, which was felt towards the Bishops and clergy of the Church. This spirit of opposition showed itself in various ways. But Archbishop Arundel was the champion of the ecclesiastical party. He was not the man quietly to sit down and see the rights of the Church ignored and trampled upon. The following anecdotes show us that he was possessed of no small amount of energy and resolution.

In the year 1403 a formidable insurrection was set on foot by Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester, who encouraged the report that Richard was still alive. The King levied an army with all expedition, and came up with the enemy near Shrewsbury. The battle was fought on both sides with great resolution, but Henry at length was victorious. Having quelled the rebellion in the north, he proceeded towards Wales, which was

* Collier, vol. iii., p. 264.

also in a state of insurrection ; but, unfortunately, his exchequer being nearly exhausted, he was forced to stop and consider how he should pay his troops. While he was musing, some of his officers, who had doubtless listened to the ranting discourses of the Lollards, came into his presence, and without heeding the Archbishop, who stood beside the King, said : “ My liege, there are several Bishops with the army in a condition to supply your highness ; marry, command that these proud prelates be sent home on foot, and their equipage and money taken from them for the public service.” Arundel now fiercely interposed. Drawing up his princely form to its full height, and scowling on the intruders, he exclaimed : “ By St. Thomas of Canterbury ! if any of these knavish soldiers offer to plunder my retinue, they may expect to be well drubbed for their pains !” The Primate looked so much as if he intended putting his threat into execution on the spot, that the officers hastily withdrew, without having gained their point.

Shortly afterwards a still more determined onslaught was made on the rights of the clergy, when Archbishop Arundel again boldly stood on the defensive. At a parliament held at Coventry, a most dolorous picture of the state of affairs was presented to the King. It was asserted that the nation was threatened on all sides with war ; that the Scotch and Welsh, the French and Flemings, were all ready to rise in arms ; that the royal exchequer was so low that there was not even sufficient to pay the troops. The knights and burgesses, however, seemed by no means anxious to bear their share of the national burden, but preferred throwing it all on the clergy. “ The laity,” said they, “ have not only spent their goods for the King, but have jeoparded their lives for his cause, while the clergy sit idle at home, and help the King never a whit.” To this most unjust accusation the Primate returned a ready answer. “ Ye know full well,” he said, “ that the clergy have always been more servicable to the exchequer than the laity ; for they have granted the crown a tenth more frequently than the laity a fifteenth. It is true that the monks and secular clergy do not serve in the field in person ; yet they do always send their servants and tenants, well appointed for the King’s service. Neither,” exclaimed the Archbishop, with increased fervour, “ do they remain at home idle and useless. You know, my lord,” said he, turning to the King, “ that such a statement is false ; for do they not serve their country by their prayers, daily *kneeling* before the Lord God Almighty in His Church, *supplicating* Him to grant success to their country’s arms ?” No one attempted to reply to the Archbishop’s manly defence, for

it was unanswerable. But it is always easy to scoff at what we cannot refute. And those who take delight in bringing odium on God's ministers are generally men who doubt the necessity of any religious belief. Such persons prefer ruling themselves by their own erring reason, rather than by God's commandments. It was so with Sir John Cheney, who now rose and spoke. This nobleman had once taken Holy Orders, but had deserted his Maker's standard and turned soldier. He was not the man therefore to relish the simple piety of Archbishop Arundel's last remark. "What care we for the prayers of the Church?" he remarked, with a sneer; "an we have nothing more stable than this to depend on, we shall do but ill." The angry blood mantled to the Primate's forehead, and with honest indignation he resented the profane and unmanly speech. "Ah! now I perceive plainly," he exclaimed, "to what end the fortune of this realm will come, where the suffrages of the Church are excluded and little set by, wherewith the Godhead is wont to be appealed; of a surety," he continued, with energy, "that kingdom which is void of prayer and devotion never continueth firm and stable." Then rising with dignity from his place, Arundel approached the King, and kneeling before him, spoke with solemn earnestness. "My liege," he said, "consider, I pray you, how by God's favour thou hast obtained this kingdom. Remember, too, that thou hast taken solemn oath to defend God's Church, and cherish and maintain the ministers thereof. I do therefore, as God's priest, beseech you not to disregard your oath, but to suffer the Church to enjoy those privileges and liberties which in the time of your predecessors it did enjoy. Yea, I would sooner have my head cut off than the Church should be destitute of one right that pertaineth to her." Then with reverence he added, "Sire, fear that King by whom all kings do reign, and provoke Him not to anger." Henry rose. With all his faults, he never showed the slightest irreverence for holy things. The Primate's arguments carried conviction to his mind. "Rise," said he to Arundel; "my intent and purpose is to leave the Church in as good a state, or better, than I found it."

Arundel was satisfied. He had gained his point, and had warded off for a time an evil which it was beyond the power of man altogether to avert. The day was not far distant when the Church's rightful property became the prey of the worldly and covetous; but Arundel did not live to witness it.

The conduct of the commons on this occasion was mean and contemptible, and Arundel took care to let them know he saw through their designs. "You, gentlemen," said he, "and others of the like opinion have already persuaded the King to seize the

revenues of cells belonging to foreign monasteries, suggesting that this project would augment the royal revenues, and keep the treasury well furnished; but now since the experiment has been made it is evident the King is not twenty shillings the richer for the seizure. You have taken effectual care to cheat the crown of those estates and beg them away for yourselves. From thence nothing can be more plain that it is not the King's interest, but your own, which makes you thus earnest to impoverish the Church; for should the King go into this execrable project—which God forbid—he would not be a farthing richer in the course of a year.”

Arundel this time silenced the commons; but, fearing lest they would again bring the matter forward, he pleaded the cause so eloquently before the lords, that they protested the Church should never be rifled in their time.*

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HENRY IV. *continued*.—1405 to 1414.

DEATH OF WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM—HE IS GREATLY RESPECTED FOR HIS CONSISTENT CONDUCT AND CHARITABLE DEEDS—HE GIVES HIS OWN REASONS FOR REFUSING TO EXPEND HIS WEALTH ON THE FOUNDATION OF MONASTERIES—HE FOUNDS COLLEGES AT WINCHESTER AND OXFORD—INSURRECTION AGAINST HENRY IN THE NORTH—THE REBELLION IS HEADED BY SCROOP, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK—HIS COWARDLY BETRAYAL—JUDGE GASCOYNE REFUSES TO SIT IN JUDGMENT ON THE ARCHBISHOP—SCROOP CONDEMNED AND EXECUTED—ARCHBISHOP ARUNDEL'S ACTIVITY AGAINST THE LOLLARDS—THE PRIMATE'S VIEWS WITH REGARD TO THE READING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE—WICLIF'S TRANSLATION CONDEMNED—ARUNDEL APPROVES OF THE STUDY OF AUTHORISED TRANSLATIONS OF HOLY WRIT—HARRY OF MONMOUTH, PRINCE OF WALES—SCENE AT BADBY'S EXECUTION—THE PRINCE DOES ALL IN HIS POWER TO INDUCE BADBY TO RECONT—HE REMAINS FIRM, AND SUFFERS—DETERMINED ATTEMPT OF THE COMMONS TO DESPOIL THE CHURCH OF HER POSSESSIONS—FAILURE OF THE SCHEME—DEATH OF HENRY IV.—HIS CHARACTER REVIEWED—PARTING WORDS TO HIS SON ON HIS DEATHBED.

In the year 1404 the famous statesman and patron of architecture, William of Wykeham, died. So universally was he respected, that during the troublous times of Richard II. he remained in favour with all parties; and when, full of years, he was called to his rest, all lamented him as a great public benefactor. Among other good works, he built the nave of his *Cathedral* at Winchester, and spent a large sum of money in

* Stow's Annals, and Collier.

erecting and endowing colleges at Winchester and Oxford, humbly remarking that, "though he was but a moderate scholar himself, he would take care to make a great many good ones." He appears to have been a long time deliberating whether he should bestow his wealth in founding a college or in building a monastery. The reasons he himself gives for deciding in favour of the former show us that, in common with many other good men of that age, he was not blind to the corruptions which had crept into the Church. "Having," he says, "long resolved to dispose of the wealth which Divine Providence had abundantly bestowed upon me to some charitable use for the public good, I felt greatly perplexed when I tried to fix my mind on some plan which might prove most useful to my country, and least liable to become abused. I first examined the various rules of the religious orders, and compared them with the lives of their several professors; but with shame and grief I was forced to declare that nowhere could I find the designs and intentions of the founders were at this time observed by any of them. This sad state of things deeply grieved me, and I had almost made up my mind to distribute with my own hands to the poor the riches God had given me, rather than found an institution which might become a snare and an occasion of guilt to those for whose benefit I had designed it. Then, after much deliberation and many prayers for divine direction, I began to consider how greatly the number of clergy had been of late reduced by wars and pestilence, and I determined to remedy, as far as I was able, the desolation of the Church, by helping poor students who wished to train themselves for Holy Orders. I therefore made up my mind to found two colleges, for the honour of God, and the increase of His worship, for the support and exaltation of the Christian faith, and the improvement of art and science." Let us not forget that to this day we are still benefiting by the liberality of the patriotic prelate William of Wykeham, and that, like most earnest-minded public benefactors, his work survives, although his body has long since crumbled to dust.

The next year, a formidable insurrection again broke out in the north. The intention of the insurgents was to dethrone Henry, whom they regarded as an usurper. Richard Scroop, Archbishop of York, was the chief leader in this rebellion. He was a man of considerable wisdom, and withal much beloved; for he led a blameless and consistent life; and this, we are told, "made the people like the better the cause he advocated, for the gravity of his age, the integrity of his life, his incomparable learning, together with the reverend aspect of his admirable

personage, moved all men to have him in no small estimation.”* Henry nipped the insurrection in the bud ; but one regrets that the good Archbishop should have become the victim of a mean stratagem. The Earl of Westmorland, hearing that the Archbishop was in arms, levied what forces he could, and marched to York, intending to fight the enemy. Finding, however, that their forces far outnumbered his, he sent to demand of the Archbishop the reason of his appearing in arms. Scroop replied that it was not his intention to disturb but settle the public peace. The Earl of Westmorland, falsely pretending to be satisfied with the explanation, desired an interview with the Archbishop, that matters might be amicably adjusted. “Let us,” said he, with consummate hypocrisy, “drink to one another in view of our men, that they may be convinced that our differences are at an end.” Scroop, not dreaming of treachery, made his appearance on the day appointed, and consented to disband all his troops. Then, with shameless treachery, the Earl secured his unsuspecting victim, and kept him in confinement until the King’s will should be known. This time, Henry was not long in deliberating. He determined, whatever might be the consequences, to procure the condemnation of this good and brave man. I am sure you have not forgotten the story, which pleased you as little children, of the good Chief Justice Gascoign, who, at the risk of his life, sent the madcap Harry, Prince of Wales, to prison for setting the laws of his country at defiance. On the occasion of which I am speaking, he showed the same noble sense of duty, and at the risk of incurring the heavy displeasure of his sovereign, steadily refused to try Archbishop Scroop for high treason. “By the constitution of this country,” said Gascoign, “neither your highness, nor any other person commissioned by you, hath any authority to sit upon the life of a bishop.” Henry was very angry at this unexpected opposition, but determined to carry his point. Finding, however, that the Chief Justice was not to be moved from his purpose, he commanded Sir William Folthorp to try the prelate. Folthorp at once condemned him as a traitor, and the same day ordered him to be led to execution. The Archbishop ascended the scaffold with calmness and composure, declaring to the last “that he never intended any harm to the King’s person.”† Archbishop Scroop was the first English bishop that had ever been condemned by the King’s judges ; and that Henry could have devised and carried out such a *scheme* without opposition is a significant proof that the power and influence of the clergy were greatly on the wane.

* Holinshed.

† Collier, vol. iii., p. 274.

In the year 1408 Archbishop Arundel held a synod at Oxford, to check, if possible, the further spread of Lollardy at the University. I would particularly call your attention to one of the rules laid down at this synod with regard to the translation and reading of Holy Scripture. Archbishop Arundel condemned Wiclif's translation of the Bible, and forbade any one to read or study it. In these days we can look back and deeply deplore what at first sight appears to us a gross act of bigotry and folly. But before we altogether condemn the Archbishop, let us try and place ourselves in his position. It is quite wrong to assert, as many do, that the bishops of the Church, at the time of which I am writing, steadily set their faces against the private study of God's Word. It is true that the people, as a body, were very ignorant of the Holy Scriptures—for this reason, that before the introduction of printing, copies of the sacred volume were necessarily very scarce, and confined chiefly to the monasteries. The view which Archbishop Arundel took of the subject was this. He rightly considered that to translate the Scriptures was a very difficult and responsible task, and ought only to be entrusted to learned and pious men, fully capable of rendering the different passages faithfully. He therefore refused to encourage the reading of any translation which had not received the sanction of the heads of the Church, lest the Christian faith should be endangered by the improper rendering of the text. It was not, therefore, that he forbade the reading of God's Word altogether, but he objected to unauthorised translations of it. Let the Archbishop speak for himself: "It is a dangerous undertaking, as St. Jerome assures us, to translate the Holy Scriptures, it being very difficult, in a version, to keep close to the sense of the inspired writers; for, by the confession of the same father, he had mistaken the meaning of several texts. We therefore decree and ordain that from henceforth no *unauthorized* person shall translate any part of the Holy Scriptures into English." He then proceeds to condemn Wiclif's translation. Although, as I have said, we must deplore this fact, we cannot be surprised that the bishops of that time should have come to such a decision. For they would naturally regard with suspicion the work of a man whose followers had in some points fallen into such grievous error. One fact, at all events, proves that Archbishop Arundel knew how to value the Holy Scriptures, and highly approved of their proper use. When good Queen Ann, the wife of Richard II., died, Arundel preached her funeral sermon. Among her other good qualities, *he mentions with warm approval her love for Holy Scripture.*

* Holinshed.

He thus speaks: "This good Queen, though an alien born, loved to study the Scriptures in English. In English she read the four gospels, together with the commentaries thereon written by the great doctors of the Church." The Queen appears to have favoured the followers of Wiclif, yet she and the Primate were intimate friends, for she valued Arundel's opinion, and often asked his advice in religious matters.

I must now introduce to your notice the noble Harry of Monmouth, Prince of Wales. We are accustomed to read of him as a wild, thoughtless, intemperate youth; yet underneath all this outward frivolity there ran a vein of true and deep Christian feeling, which even at this time manifested itself on several occasions. A poor smith, of the name of Badby, was convicted of heresy. As usual, he refused to give up the peculiar views held by most of the Lollards with regard to the Holy Eucharist, and so he was condemned to be burnt alive. Prince Henry was present at his execution; but it was not curiosity that brought him there. Deeply grieved at the cruel fate that awaited the poor man, Henry approached him, and used every argument he could think of to induce him to renounce what was then considered a most fatal and false opinion. But Badby bravely preferred to suffer an agonizing death rather than give up what he believed to be true, and so the fire was lighted around him. The torture was very severe, and the martyr cried aloud for mercy. Again Henry interfered, and ordered the fire to be put out. His gentle nature could not look on human suffering unmoved. He promised Badby life, pardon, nay, even an allowance out of his own private purse, if he would confess his error and renounce it. But Badby remained firm; and at length, Henry, though most reluctantly, was forced to permit the law to take its course. We hardly know which to admire most, the constancy of the martyr or the tender compassion of the Prince, who, if he could, would altogether have prevented the cruel deed of bloodshed.

In the year 1410 another vigorous attempt was made by the Commons to despoil the Church of her worldly possessions, or temporalities, as they were called. The petition presented to the King was certainly put in a very practical form, and showed that those who penned it had given the matter some consideration. It runs thus: "To the most excellent Lord the King, and to all the nobles in this present parliament assembled. Your faithful Commons do humbly signify that our Sovereign Lord *the King* might have of the temporal possessions, lands, and revenues, which are lewdly spent, consumed, and wasted, by the *bishops, abbots, and priors*, within this realm, so much in value

as would suffice to find and sustain one hundred and fifty earls, one thousand five hundred knights, six thousand two hundred esquires, and one hundred hospitals more than now be." But Henry was not an avaricious man; moreover, he still showed a certain regard for holy things, and consequently was proof against the tempting bait held out to him. We read, "he misliked the notion;"* and so the petition of his loyal Commons fell to the ground.

Henry IV. died in the year 1413. The story of his chequered life will have given you some insight into his character. There is no doubt he was guilty of many grave faults, and we may not justify his treatment of Richard; but if ever circumstances could excuse a man's acts, it would be in the case of Henry IV. Although his usurpation itself was a wrongful act, it cannot be said that it was an unfortunate one for his country. For Henry possessed many qualities which well fitted him for his high station. Holinshed thus speaks of him: "Henry was of a mean† stature, well-proportioned, and generally compact, quick, and lively, and of a stout courage. In his latter days he showed himself so gentle, that he gat more love amongst the nobles and people of this realm than he had purchased malice and evil will at the beginning." We have seen that Henry was by no means devoid of religious feeling; his conscience was tender, and the unlawful act which raised him to the throne of England weighed upon his mind to the last. Finding that the world and its fleeting vanities failed to give him true peace, he clung the more to holy things. As the end approached, he sought comfort in religious exercises, and in striving more earnestly to do the will of God.

I cannot do better than conclude this chapter by quoting the words he addressed to his son on his death-bed. They are full of noble Christian advice; and when we afterwards see how conscientiously Prince Henry carried out their spirit in all his acts, we must believe that his father, both by precept and example, aimed at making him a Christian sovereign. As the spark of life was slowly ebbing, Henry beckoned his son to his bedside, and uttered the following words: "My son, thou shalt fear and dread God above all things; and thou shalt love, honour, and worship Him with all thine heart; thou shalt attribute and ascribe to Him all things wherein thou seest thyself to be well fortunate, be it victory of thine enemies, love of thy friends, obedience of thy subjects, strength and activeness of body, honour or riches, or any other thing, whatsoever it be, that *chanceth to thy pleasure*. Thou shalt not imagine that

* Holinshed.

† Middle.

any such thing should fortune to thee by *thine* act or by *thy* desert; but thou shalt think that all cometh to thee only of the goodness of the Lord. And so, thyself eschewing all vain-glory and elation of heart, follow the wholesome counsel of the Psalmist, who saith: 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Holy Name be given laud and praise.' "

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HENRY V.—1414.

APPREHENSIONS OF THE NATION ON HENRY'S ACCESSION—THEY ARE ALL DISPELLED BY HIS WISE AND CHRISTIAN CONDUCT—THE LOLLARDS INCREASE IN NUMBER AND ACTIVITY—SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE—HIS EARLY FRIENDSHIP FOR HENRY—HIS BRAVERY—HE BECOMES A VIOLENT PARTISAN OF LOLLARDY—IS CONVICTED OF HERESY—HENRY ENDEAVOURS TO BRING HIM OVER TO THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH, BUT FAILS—OLDCASTLE DEFIES THE PRIMATE AND BISHOPS—HE REFUSES TO APPEAR AND ANSWER FOR HIS OPINIONS—HE IS SEIZED AND BROUGHT BEFORE ARUNDEL—HIS TRIAL AND CONDEMNATION—HE ESCAPES FROM THE TOWER—HIS REBELLIOUS PROCEEDINGS—INSURRECTION OF THE LOLLARDS SUPPRESSED—DEATH AND CHARACTER OF ARCHBISHOP ARUNDEL—THE TREATMENT OF THE LOLLARDS CONSIDERED.

IN early youth, Prince Henry had shown symptoms of a wild and reckless disposition, which not only gave his father great uneasiness, but had filled the mind of the English nation with serious apprehension. The frivolous and sinful conduct of his predecessor, Richard II., was still fresh in the minds of the people; and when they saw the young Prince delighting in the society of gay and reckless favourites, they naturally dreaded that the old scenes of folly and violence would be repeated. Happily, there was now little ground for such fears. Henry, by his high-minded and truthful conduct, soon dispelled all the people's apprehensions, and gave proofs that he was not only an able sovereign, but also a Christian man. We read that no sooner was the royal crown placed upon his head, than he determined to put on him the shape of a new man; for, as aforetime he had made himself companion with unruly mates of dissolute order and life, he now banished them all from his presence, forbidding them, on a great pain, not once to approach, lodge, or sojourn within ten miles of his court or presence; while, in their place, he chose men of gravity, wit, and high *policy*, by whose wise counsel he might at all times rule to his *honour* and dignity. Believing from his heart that righteousness only exalteth a nation, and that sin is a reproach to any

people,* Henry determined in all his acts to seek first God's glory, as the only true foundation of national prosperity; virtuously considering in his own mind that all goodness cometh of God, he determined to begin with something acceptable to His Divine Majesty. He therefore commanded the clergy sincerely and truly to preach the Word of God, and to live accordingly, that they might be the lanterns of light to the temporality, as their profession required.† That the religious principle on which he himself acted might be carried out, Henry elected the "best and most learned men in the laws of the realm to the offices of justice; and men of good living he preferred to high degrees of authority."‡ One of these was the brave and conscientious Judge Gascoign, who had not feared to punish even the heir apparent for his faults. In this act Henry showed the greatness of his mind. He loved and respected the man who had had the courage to arrest him in his course of folly and dissipation, while he justly believed that no earthly terror could ever withhold such a judge from doing his duty wisely and fearlessly. From the little I have already said of Henry V., I think you will be prepared by-and-by to agree with me, that he was one of the noblest and most high-minded princes that ever sat on the throne of England. This Prince combined in his character the courage and fearlessness of a brave soldier with all the tenderness and compassion of a woman. He would have scorned to injure the meanest creature in his realm, and yet he could brave death and pain and weariness, as few men could. It is only in a really Christian character that we find these two apparently opposite qualities combined. Henry had never countenanced his father's usurpation; and in order publicly to show that he disapproved of the treatment Richard had received, he ordered his body to be interred with great pomp and ceremony, and even cherished those who had shown their attachment to the unfortunate King. About this time the Lollards appear to have been more than usually active. They had now become a powerful political party; and as the opinions they promulgated were often very seditious, Archbishop Arundel, backed by the government, proceeded to take strong measures against them. That Henry would fain have tried gentle means first, is evident from his conduct on coming to the throne. The dreadful scene he had witnessed at Badby's execution made a lasting impression on his compassionate heart; and when he heard that four poor Lollards' widows were left destitute, by their husbands' property having been confiscated before they suffered death, he at once ordered that it should all be restored

* *Prov. xiv. 34.*† *Holinshed.*‡ *Ibid.*

to the bereaved women and their fatherless children. Henry was soon, however, placed in a most difficult and perplexing situation; and we cannot but admire the noble efforts he made to overcome what would be called the prejudices of his age. The opinions of Wiclif were by no means confined to the humbler classes. At this time many knights and gentlemen owned themselves his followers, and greatly promoted the spread of Lollardy by maintaining large numbers of Lollard preachers, and sending them all over the country. No one was more conspicuous in this way than Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham. A brave and fearless soldier, he had served his country faithfully during the reigns of Richard II. and Henry IV. Admiring his gallant conduct and open-heartedness, Henry V., when Prince of Wales, had contracted a close friendship with the knight, and now determined, with the faithfulness of a true friend, to stand by him in his hour of danger. The history of Sir John Oldcastle's religious opinions is not an uncommon one. Early convinced of the hollowness and vanity of a life of mere pleasure and thoughtlessness, he soon began to seek diligently for something that would give peace to his troubled mind. Unhappily, he had never been trained as a child in sound Christian doctrine; and therefore, when he came in contact with the Lollards, he failed to see what was really erroneous in their opinions, and threw himself into their cause with all the ardour and zeal of his enthusiastic nature. It was enough for him, "until he knew that despised doctrine, he had never," as he declares, "abstained from sin." With the resolute spirit of a soldier, he now determined to do all in his power to advance the spread of those opinions which had given him the peace of mind for which he had long sought. It is, indeed, to be regretted that so noble-minded a man should have adopted all the most seditious and fanatical notions of Lollardy. But Oldcastle was not a man to rest satisfied with a moderate course. He had espoused the cause wholly and entirely, and neither threats, torture, nor even the fear of death had any power to turn him from his purpose.

In the year 1413, a complaint was made to convocation (as the meeting of the clergy is called), that Lord Cobham not only maintained in his house preachers who had been convicted of heresy, but also sent them about the country to preach, and that he himself attended their preaching, with his household, to countenance and protect them. The law of the land had been set at nought, and Sir John Oldcastle was denounced as a *heretic*. King Henry's religious faith was simple and sincere; *he was not a man who could argue ably on religious doctrine,*

but his life bore testimony to the truth of what he believed. His gentle nature soon took alarm at the danger in which his old friend stood, and with true humanity he begged the Bishops to proceed in the matter charitably ; “ for,” says the writer I have before quoted, “ having compassion on the noble man, he required the prelates, that, if he were a strayed sheep, rather by gentleness than by rigour to reduce him to the fold.”* Not content with this, he sent for the offending knight, and refused to permit any steps to be taken against him until he had tried the effect of his own honest persuasions. But all in vain. Sir John Oldcastle was not to be moved by the simple arguments of his friend and sovereign. His concluding words to Henry show us the indomitable temper of the man and the strength of his religious belief. “ You, most worthy Prince, I am always prompt and willing to obey, forasmuch as I know you to be a Christian King, and the appointed minister of God, bearing the sword for the punishment of evildoers, and for safeguard of them that be virtuous. Unto you, next my Eternal God, owe I my whole obedience, and submit thereunto, as I have ever done, all that I have either of fortune or nature ; ready at all times to fulfil whatsoever ye shall, in the Lord, command me. But as touching the Pope and his spirituality, I owe them neither suit nor service, forasmuch as I know him, by the Scriptures, to be the great Antichrist, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place.” Henry, finding that his friend was not to be moved from his purpose, informed the Archbishop that the law had better take its course. But Lord Cobham determined to set both law and Church at defiance. He entrenched himself in his castle near Rochester, and refused to admit any of the Archbishop’s emissaries. Arundel then caused his summons to be affixed to the doors of Rochester Cathedral ; but Cobham had them torn down, that all might see he hated and defied the Bishops.

In the first instance Arundel was certainly disposed to deal gently with Oldcastle, as Henry had recommended ; but now it was clear to his mind that the man who had set at nought the law of the land must be brought to justice. He therefore excommunicated the incorrigible knight, and summoned him to appear on St. Matthew’s Day to answer in court for the opinions he held. As you may imagine, Oldcastle cared nothing for the excommunication, and steadily refused to obey the summons. His old friendship, however, for Henry was still strong ; for at this juncture he went again to him, and in a long and elaborate argument *entered upon* the reasons for becoming a Lollard.

* Holinshed.

I dare say a good deal of that conversation bewildered the simple mind of Henry, who was not clever at religious argument ; but for all that he was a practical man ; and one thing was clear to him ; Sir John Oldcastle had defied the law of the land, set the authority of the Church at defiance, and therefore, as King, he had no right to encourage him in such a course. Still, Henry was not one who could easily forget and rudely sever an old friendship. He was in sore perplexity. He must either break the laws of his country, which he had sworn to enforce, or he must stand by and see his once-beloved friend delivered over to a cruel death. The decision he at length came to was just what we should have expected from a humble-minded man, who distrusted his own judgment, and had an equally exalted opinion of God's priests. We read that "Henry, considering that accusations touching matters of faith should be tried by his spiritual prelates, sent Sir John Oldcastle to the Tower of London, there to abide the determination of the clergy."*

You will see, from all I have said, that Henry was most reluctant to proceed against his erring friend. Nor was even Archbishop Arundel at all in haste to condemn the Lollard knight. It is evident that he not only wished to consider the King's wishes in the matter, but was himself anxious to give Oldcastle every opportunity of clearing himself. The examination to which he was subjected was a long and searching one. Some of his opinions were true and good ; but others were clearly false and seditious. Arundel endeavoured by every means in his power to induce him to take a different view of the matter ; but the dauntless spirit of the knight was not to be subdued. He determined to brave torture and death rather than give up one iota of what he believed to be the truth. The examination lasted many hours ; but still the Primate's patience was not exhausted. With all the eloquence of which he was capable, he besought Oldcastle to confess his errors, that he might receive his priestly absolution. But all was of no avail. The knight's reply was still resolute and defiant. "Nay, forsooth," he exclaimed, "I will not confess to you, for I have never trespassed against you, and, therefore, I have no need to ask your forgiveness." Then, throwing himself on his knees, and raising his hands towards heaven, he fervently exclaimed : "I shrive me here unto Thee, my Eternal-living God, that in my frail youth I offended Thee, O Lord ! most grievously in pride, wrath, and gluttony, and covetousness ; many men have *I hurt in mine anger, and done many horrible sins. Good Lord ! have mercy upon my soul !*" Then, with tears in his eyes, he

* Holinshed.

turned towards the people, and said: "For the breaking of God's laws and His commandments, these prelates never cursed me; but for their own laws and traditions most cruelly do they handle me and others; and therefore both they and their laws shall be utterly destroyed." Then, with a loud voice, he cried: "Good people, these prelates and judges are vile seducers; they will fain carry your souls to hell; therefore have a care that ye be not governed by their directions." Such a speech could not be permitted. Arundel arose, and struggling with his emotion, condemned Sir John Oldcastle as an obstinate heretic, and ordered him to be delivered over to the secular power. After pronouncing sentence, the Primate hastily retired from the court, and went at once to the King. His errand was a Christian one. He wished to give his prisoner one last opportunity of escape, and so he begged Henry to put off the execution of the sentence for fifty days. Arundel vainly hoped that Sir John Oldcastle might, if he had time allowed him, see the error of his ways. But the charitable intentions of the Primate, and the friendly efforts of the King, were destined to be frustrated. Events soon occurred which left the government in no doubt as to the treasonable intentions of Lord Cobham. The silent hours which had been allotted to the Lollard knight in the Tower were not spent by him in meditating on his errors, but were employed in quite another manner. One dark night, as the city was buried in slumber, Sir John Oldcastle contrived to make his escape, and appearing among his astonished followers, declared that he intended to avenge the wrongs he had suffered by appearing in open arms against his sovereign. Burning with fanatical enthusiasm, and believing their cause to be favoured by Heaven, the Lollards rose in large numbers in London, and at dead of night assembled themselves in St. Giles's Fields, hoping to be joined by their hero and champion, Lord Cobham.

Happily, the King was apprised of this formidable outbreak, and suddenly appearing before the rioters, demanded for what purpose they were assembled there in arms. The answer was prompt and honest: "We are here to meet the Lord Cobham, who has promised to be our leader." The King's course was now clear. He seized two of the leaders of the rebellion, Sir Roger Acton, and Beverley, a Lollard preacher, and offered a reward of one thousand marks to any one who would capture Cobham himself. By such decisive measures the rebellion was stifled, and the rioters dispersed. In the first instance, Sir John Oldcastle had merely been an honest fanatic; now he had become an open enemy to all lawful authority; therefore the

King and prelates only did their duty in bringing him to justice. Notwithstanding the enormous sum offered for his capture, the rebel knight was so popular that for a long time he continued to elude the King's officers. The conclusion of his sad history I must reserve for another chapter.

Shortly after this insurrection was suppressed, Archbishop Arundel died. Like most men of decided character, Arundel had strong passions to subdue; which we have seen at times mastered him. Judged by the Christian standard, his disloyal conduct to his rightful sovereign cannot be excused, although we may fully appreciate the great provocation he had received. Many writers have stigmatized the Primate as a mere heartless and cruel bigot; and his treatment of the Lollards is regarded as an unjust and unholy persecution. Had the Lollards been only religious zealots, and not political offenders as well, there would, perhaps, have been more reason in such a statement; but even then we ought not to blame the judge who carries out the law of his country, although we may condemn the law itself as unjust and cruel. The blame in that case rests on the faulty system, and not on the man who is bound to enforce it. But although in this particular excuse may be offered for Arundel, it is to be deeply deplored that he made the view held by the Church at that time with respect to the Holy Eucharist the test of heresy; more particularly as the opinions then held by our Church with regard to this solemn ordinance were by no means so pure and scriptural as they had been in earlier ages.

A learned writer, whom I have often quoted, censures the Primate Arundel for his conduct in this respect; but at the same time he ably brings before us the errors of the Lollards. "It must be said," he remarks, "that the Lollards had given Archbishop Arundel great provocation for persecution. They attacked him on the authority of his character, and struck directly at the patrimony of the Church. It is true that they had recovered some ancient doctrines; but then they were so unhappy as to blend these truths with capital errors. Their notion of property and Church power was wretched and dangerous. They seemed actuated by a dark and tempestuous zeal. Their scheme, could they have brought it to bear, would have taken away the supports of learning and religion, made the worship of God contemptible, and put a spade instead of a crosier into the Bishop's hands. They had no regard to the apostolical succession of priesthood; maintained a regular life a *sufficient* warrant for that function. The primitive Christians," *he concludes*, "were of quite a different sentiment. They did not believe the merit of any man's probity could authorise him to

seal covenants in our Saviour's name, and represent Him in the character of a priest. It was their constant belief that no man ought to take this honour unto himself without a mission from the hierarchy, and being called of God, as was Aaron. And, therefore, though they would not have burnt the Lollards, we have reason to believe they would never have endured their communion."*

CHAPTER XL.

HENRY V. *continued.*—1413 to 1422.

THE LOLLARDS DECLINE IN POPULAR FAVOUR—THEY ARE NOT THE ONLY REFORMERS—THE PRELATES AND THE KING BOTH DESIRE TO CORRECT THE ABUSES THAT HAD CREPT INTO THE CHURCH—SCENE IN THE CHAPTER HOUSE AT WESTMINSTER—ARTICLES OF OXFORD—THE PRINCIPLE OF PERSECUTION ESTABLISHED—CHICHELEY, BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S, SUCCEEDS ARUNDEL IN THE PRIMACY—CHICHELEY'S POLITIC CONDUCT—HE RESOLUTELY DEFENDS THE CHURCH AGAINST THOSE WHO WOULD SEIZE HER POSSESSIONS—DIVERTS THE KING'S MIND BY INDUCING HIM TO LAY CLAIM TO THE CROWN OF FRANCE—PIETY OF KING HENRY—HIS ADDRESS TO HIS SOLDIERS BEFORE THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT—PUBLIC REJOICINGS AT HIS VICTORY—HUMILITY OF HENRY—HE REFUSES TO ACCEPT HIS PEOPLE'S PRAISES—STORY OF THE HELMET HE WORE AT AGINCOURT—DISGRACEFUL RIOT IN ST. DUNSTAN'S CHURCH—ARCHBISHOP CHICHELEY'S RESOLUTE AND IMPARTIAL BEHAVIOUR—HE PUNISHES THE OFFENDERS WITH SEVERITY—SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE SEIZED—HIS TRIAL AND DEFENCE—HE IS CONDEMNED TO SUFFER DEATH—REFLECTIONS ON HIS CHARACTER—EARLY DEATH OF HENRY V.—HIS LAST WORDS—HIS LOVE FOR HOLY SCRIPTURE—CONCLUSION.

THE seditious behaviour of the Lollards had opened men's eyes to the unsafe tendency of their religious teaching. From this time they gradually dwindled into a despised sect, and lost most of their influence in the state. But the subjects they had brought forward, the real corruptions of the Church they had exposed, were not forgotten. For though Lollardy was well-nigh suppressed, the great body of the English Church and nation still looked forward to a reform, which, in God's own good time, was brought about. But we shall fall into a serious error if we imagine that the Lollards were the only people who desired a reform in the Church. Even Archbishops Arundel and Courtenay, their much-reviled persecutors, were reformers; for the laws they enacted sufficiently prove that they were not satisfied with existing abuses. It is hardly needful for me to mention such names as Bishop Grostête, Bradwardine, Langham, Islip, and William of Wykeham, because no one can doubt but that

* Collier, vol. iii., p. 299.

they were as staunch reformers as the Lollards, only in a different way. It is a remarkable fact that those parliaments which were most active against the followers of Wiclif were equally resolute in resisting the unlawful aggressions of the Pope.*

King Henry was himself a reformer. Notwithstanding his reverence for the Church, he was not blind to its defects. There is an interesting story told of him, how, having received complaints of the Benedictine monks, he called a large meeting of them in the Chapter House at Westminster, hoping to influence them by his presence and exhortations. Sixty abbots obeyed the summons, and more than three hundred monks. Both clergy and laity had learned to respect their King; and when the Bishop of Exeter had ended his speech, and Henry rose, all listened attentively to his simple but earnest appeal. "He reminded his Benedictine hearers of the ancient piety of the monks, the devotion of his predecessors and others in founding monasteries. He then boldly exposed their present negligence and remissness in the discharge of their sacred duties, which he declared had by this time become notorious. He then earnestly begged them to reform themselves, entreating them to recover the ancient spirit of religion they had lost, and exhorted them to pray for their King, their country, and their Church, assuring them that if they would follow his directions they need fear none of their enemies."†

In the year 1414 the University of Oxford published certain articles concerning the Reformation of the Church, which had been drawn up, as they declare, by the King's express command. Had not the war with France intervened, and occupied all Henry's thoughts and energies, it is most probable that he would have taken steps in the matter; for so resolutely was he bent on reforming the abuses which all acknowledged had crept into the Church, that he is said to have declared that if the bishops would not reform them, he would do so himself.‡ But the Lollards' view of reformation was not to be tolerated; and the very men who desired to rid their Church of its abuses were most active in searching for and punishing the followers of Wiclif. The tide of popular feeling had turned against these despised but resolute men; and even the bishops, had they been charitably disposed, must have been far in advance of their age, could they have resisted the popular clamour. One of the articles of Oxford thus runs: "Any bishop who shall be remiss in purging his diocese of heretics shall be deposed. Civil officers shall take an oath to aid the bishops against them, and

* Dr. Hook, vol. iv., p. 490.

† Tyler's Life of Henry V.

‡ Massinberg's History of the Reformation.

all Lollard books and translations shall be put down by law, until proper translations shall be made." Thus the law of persecution was unhappily fully established, and the bishops had no course but to carry it out. It is remarkable that such articles as these should have been put forth by the University of Oxford, which had in the first instance so vigorously supported Wiclif and his followers.

Let us turn for a time to other matters. The See of Canterbury was not long allowed to remain vacant. In the year 1414 Henry procured the election of Henry Chicheley, Bishop of St. David's, to the Primacy. In this case, the King showed his usual judgment and sound sense; for Chicheley was a man well worthy of the high dignity conferred upon him. He had been employed by Henry on several delicate embassies, and had acquitted himself not only as a Christian priest, but as a clever and sensible man of the world. The times certainly required that the Primate should be a man of wisdom as well as piety, and Chicheley was soon called upon to give proof of his ability as a statesman. At a parliament held by the King at Leicester, the Commons again brought forward their old grievance, that all the wealth of the nation was confined to the clergy, and that they ought to resign their temporal possessions to the King. This time the motion was vigorously supported—a proof that the feeling against the clergy was on the increase.

But Archbishop Chicheley, like his predecessor Arundel, was quite equal to the occasion; and we must own that the device that he hit upon to divert the King's mind from the plausible arguments of his opponents was cunningly formed and cleverly executed. Well aware of Henry's active and enterprising temper, and that he loved to engage in difficult undertakings, the Archbishop proposed that he should lay claim to the crown of France, hoping that if he engaged in a foreign expedition he would be less likely to unsettle or alter the laws at home. Chicheley's arguments were much the same as those used by the statesmen in Edward III.'s time; and although to us they may seem unjust and unreasonable, they were not considered to be so at the time. Henry respected and valued the Primate's opinion; and as he delivered his eloquent harangue, the King listened with eager attention, for the subject was to him of deep interest. After forcibly dwelling on Henry's right to the crown of France, Chicheley concluded his speech with the following stirring words: "Not to insist any further on the justice of the cause, which has commonly *the blessing of Heaven*; not to insist upon this, there *are other great inducements* to the enterprise. Your highness

is in the flower of your age, and happy in a strong constitution; your nobility and commons are well affected to your government, and ready to obey your orders. You are soeverign of a very powerful kingdom, and furnished with all things necessary to appear formidable in the field. And as for your subjects of the clergy, we have decreed you a greater subsidy than ever your ancestors received from our order; this present we lay at your highness's feet, with all the duty and inclination imaginable, and shall continue to implore the blessing of Providence on your arms, and that by success of the expedition, God would please to declare the justice of your quarrel to the whole world." The King rose from his seat; he was visibly affected by the Archbishop's words; while the impression they had made on the rest of the audience was fully attested by the loud shouts of War! War! France! France! which rang through the hall. The Primate's crafty scheme had succeeded. "The Bill for dissolving religious houses was," we are told, "cheerily set aside, and nothing thought of but the recovery of France, as the Archbishop had moved."* But though to Henry and Chicheley the cause in which they had embarked may have appeared a righteous and a lawful one, their ambitious designs are certainly to be blamed. In that age nothing was more popular than a war with France. In this respect Henry shared the people's weakness; and so, rather than give up his claim, he involved the two nations in a disastrous war.

It is not my intention here to enter upon Henry's brief but brilliant campaign, an account of which you can read in the history of England. I shall only notice one or two points connected with it, because they throw light on Henry's character, and prove him to have been not only a brave and dauntless soldier, but also a good and pious man. His childlike, yet firm belief in an overruling Providence is very beautiful to dwell upon. Moments of extreme trial and peril, instead of discouraging him, or causing him to doubt God's love, only made him cling more closely to his Heavenly Guide, and distrust more and more his own weak resolution. Perhaps no victory was more complete or famous than that of Agincourt; and yet few battles had been fought under such overwhelming difficulties. Why should we shrink from acknowledging that the victory was to be attributed mainly to the pious prayer of the Christian King, who so fervently invoked God's blessing on the eve of that great engagement? The account which the old writer I *have* so often quoted gives us of this event is so graphic, that I *cannot* do better than give you his own words. After telling

* Holinshed.

us that the mere handful of English soldiers who were about to do battle with the overwhelming ranks of the French, were "sore weary, and well-nigh famished" with their long march, he says: "These men commended their souls to God and Christ, asking assistance at His hands, who is the only giver of victory, while they determined to die rather than yield or flee." Few murmured; only one man exclaimed: "Would to God there were with us now as many good soldiers as are this hour in England." The King rebuked him, and, with characteristic piety, exclaimed, "I would not wish a man more here than I have. We are indeed, in comparison of the enemies, but a few; but if God of His clemency do favour us and our just cause (as I trust He will), we shall speed well enough. If it please God to grant us the victory, let us not ascribe it to our own strength or might, but only to His assistance, to whom I have no doubt we shall worthily have cause to give thanks therefore; and if it so be that for our offences' sakes we be delivered into the hands of our enemies, the less number we have, the less damage shall the realm of England sustain. But if we should fight in trust of multitude of men, and so get the victory (our minds being prone to pride), we should therefore peradventure ascribe the victory, not so much to the gift of God, as to our own puissance, and therefore provoke His high indignation and displeasure against us. But," he fervently added, "be ye of good comfort, and show yourselves valiant. God and our just quarrel shall defend us, and deliver these our proud adversaries, with all the multitude of them which you see, into our hands." With such noble, manly arguments did Henry cheer the drooping hearts of his soldiers, and lead them on to victory. But the most conspicuous quality of this good King was his singular humility. By constant self-examination and watchfulness, he had discovered the frailty of his own heart, and therefore never gave heed to any kind of flattery. He even discouraged his people from awarding to him the praise he so well merited. Few conquerors would have received as Henry did the joyful acclamations which greeted him on his return from the victory at Agincourt. I will give you the account of this interesting scene in the words of an old writer. Henry had been foremost in the thick of the fight, and his battered and be-dimmed armour bore testimony to the fierce courage of its royal owner. But even these trophies of victory, as we shall see, were regarded by Henry as fostering the natural pride of the human heart, and were therefore to be set aside as dangerous snares. As the King and his veterans *approached the City of London*, a brilliant procession came *forth to welcome the conquerors*. "The mayor and aldermen,"

we read, in the graphic language of olden times, "appeared in orient-grained scarlet, and four hundred commoners, clad in beautiful murrie, well mounted, and trimly horsed with red collars and great chains. Then came the clergy of London, with their rich crosses, sumptuous copes, and massy censers. They met the King in solemn procession at St. Thomas of Waterings, rejoicing at his return. But Henry," continues the narrative, "like a grave and sober personage, and as one remembering from whom all victories are sent, seemed little to regard such vain pomps and shows as were in triumphant sort designed for his welcome home from so prosperous a journey; inasmuch as he would not suffer his helmet to be carried before him, whereby might have appeared to the people the blows and dents that were to be seen on the same. Neither would he suffer any ditties to be used and sung by minstrels of his glorious victory; for that he would wholly have the praise and thanks altogether given to God." It is a fact worth noting, that this very helmet, which the gallant but humble-minded soldier would fain have hidden from view, has been gazed on with pride by all succeeding generations. It now holds a conspicuous place among the time-honoured relics of the ancient Abbey of Westminster. As we look on its dents and rusty scratches, and think on the Christian hero who wore it, that true and forcible passage of Holy Writ comes into our minds: "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

During Henry's absence Archbishop Chicheley was very active against the Lollards. Numbers of these unfortunate men were convicted, we must own, in many instances, on very slight grounds; but the principle of persecution once admitted, it was no easy matter to draw the line between those who were really heretics and those who were not. But though Chicheley may have erred in this respect, he was an impartial judge, an able statesman, and a loyal and attached servant of the crown. His stern and conscientious nature could find no excuse for those who transgressed the law of the land, and he punished all offenders, whether high or low, rich or poor, with equal severity. To prove what I have stated, I will briefly relate what took place at St. Dunstan's Church at this time, on Easter Day. On this Holy Festival the Lord Strange and his lady presented themselves at the door of the Church, at vespers or evensong. But, like too many others, though they had come to join with *their lips* in God's service, their hearts were the abode of evil *and revengeful* thoughts. It happened that Lord Strange had long been at bitter enmity with Sir John Trussel; and just as

service began he happened to raise his eyes, and they fell on his hated adversary, who with his son and some others of his family were kneeling not far off. His evil passions were suddenly aroused; he started up, and, forgetting the sanctity of the place and the presence of an All Holy God, he rushed upon Sir John Trussel, and wounded him. An honest citizen who endeavoured to separate the combatants received his death-blow. These outrages were followed by a general mêlée, the attendants of both parties joining furiously in the fray. The news of this disgraceful riot and murder soon reached the ears of Archbishop Chicheley. Horrified at the manner in which God's house had been desecrated, he ordered the Church to be placed under interdict, and the offending persons to be solemnly cursed at St. Paul's Cross. Nor was this all; he compelled Lord Strange and his lady to appear before him, and in St. Paul's Cathedral, on bended knees, to ask pardon of the God whose sanctuary they had so grievously profaned. Chicheley was no respecter of persons; a public and shameful outrage had been committed, and publicly it must be atoned for. He therefore compelled the offending nobleman and his lady to do penance. On a chilly autumn day, exposed to the scorn of the assembled mob, the penitents walked barefooted from St. Paul's Cathedral to St. Dunstan's with lighted tapers in their hands. He further obliged the lady to expend a large sum of money on some handsome ornaments for the altar. As the Lady Strange shared the punishment with her passionate lord, I conclude that the Primate knew she had either connived at the affray, or at least looked on without any effort to stop it.

I must now relate the mournful ending of the story of Lord Cobham. While Henry was away in France, his retreat was discovered, and he was seized, after having already on several occasions narrowly escaped. He sold his liberty dearly, defending himself with the bravery and resolution of a true knight. Nor did he surrender himself prisoner until severely wounded. The Duke of Bedford, the King's brother, was Regent during his absence. Oldcastle was brought before him and arraigned for high treason. It is to be remarked that on this occasion no mention is made of heresy, the Duke, most probably, not considering it his place to deal with religious questions. Oldcastle was accused of abetting the King's enemies, and compassing his sovereign's overthrow; he therefore had but this one accusation to answer; and we must own that he either would not or could not reply to it honestly and openly. Few things more completely prove his guilt than the vague and *fanatical defence* he offered before his accusers. When asked by

the Duke what excuse he had to offer for his rebellious conduct, he avoided the question, and began to preach of the mercies of God. "My lord," said he, "thou art not aware, methinks, that they who profess to follow Christ should love mercy and judgment, for vengeance pertaineth only to the Lord; ye have, therefore, no right to entrench upon the prerogative of the Almighty." The Duke's reply was a common-sense one: "Prythee," said he, "what hath this matter to do with the question? I again demand, what excuse have you to offer?" But Oldcastle was not to be checked in his religious ramblings. If he could not act up to Scripture, he could at all events quote it. "It is a very small thing," he exclaimed, "that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." "This is folly," interrupted the Chief Justice, who failed to perceive that St. Paul's words applied to the prisoner's case. "Why spend we all this time in vain parley, Sir John Oldcastle? I again demand, have you any reason to bring forward why the law should not take its course?" The reply was a startling one, but it settled the question, and relieved the judges from any further responsibility: "I own ye not as my judges," he exclaimed; "for I yet believe that my rightful sovereign, King Richard, still lives in Scotland." Sir John Oldcastle was condemned to be hanged for treason, and burnt for heresy; and both these dreadful sentences were duly carried out. He was hanged on a gallows, while the fire was lit underneath. But the dauntless spirit of the man survived to the last, and he bore without a cry or a groan the tortures prepared for him. We learn with a feeling of relief that the humane Henry was not implicated in this last dreadful scene. He had before, as we have read, gladly respited Oldcastle, and now we find that he never issued the warrant for his execution.* Henry was in France when the news reached him of the trial and death of his old friend. Whatever he may have felt with regard to Oldcastle's treasonable attempts against his throne, we can have no doubt that his kind and gentle spirit lamented the fate of one whom for so many years he had loved and esteemed. By some Sir John Oldcastle has been placed foremost in the rank of the "noble army of martyrs." But although he suffered a cruel death with the fortitude and resignation of a martyr, we must distinguish between martyrdom and treason. All the writers of the time agree in one respect. They believed without doubt that Sir John Oldcastle was guilty of high treason, nor did he himself, as we have seen, ever attempt to deny it. The man who with impunity tramples upon the laws of his country, and is guilty of open rebellion against

* Tyler's Life of Henry V.

his sovereign, cannot claim the title of martyr. We may shudder, indeed, at the cruel death to which the age subjected him; and while we admire his courage and dauntless resolution, we ought to regret that these virtues were enlisted on the side of rebellion and fanaticism, instead of in defence of his King and in the maintenance of a sound and sober reformation of his Church.

Henry was not long permitted to enjoy his conquests. He was called away in the midst of triumph and glory, at the early age of thirty-four. Universally admired and beloved as he was, the sad news of his death struck dismay into the hearts of the English people. Always regardless of his own safety and comfort, he took no pains to husband his strength, so that the perils he had undergone, and the hardships he had so cheerfully endured, soon told upon his naturally strong and vigorous constitution; and, in the midst of victory, death came upon him suddenly and surely. So vain and uncertain are all human undertakings. It will do you no harm to dwell for a few moments on this good King's death-bed. His brother and faithful attendants pressed around his couch, and with tearful eyes listened to his last words. Henry was calm and resigned. "In all my sieges and battles," he murmured, "death hath never appeared formidable to me; so now, without horror, I regard its slow approach. It is my Creator's will that I should yield up my breath. His Holy Will be done."

The facts I have recorded with regard to Henry V. prove him without doubt to have been a man of sincere and earnest piety; and I believe his consistent conduct is mainly to be attributed to his love and reverence for Holy Scripture. His chaplain tells us that he so much loved God's Word, that every day of his life he read and meditated on it, for the express purpose of learning how best to love and serve his Saviour. "A daily exercise," continued the chaplain, "from which, when he was engaged in it, no one, even his chief nobles or the great men of his estate, could withdraw him."* If further proof be wanting of Henry's simple faith, we find, among the details of his expenditure, the following most interesting item: "To John Heth, 3*l.* 16*s.*, for 66 quarterns of calf-skins, purchased by the said John to write a Bible thereon for the use of the King."† In conclusion, let me quote the quaint and pithy words of an old writer, who dwells with delight on his soldier-like qualities: "On the last of August, King Henry V. ended his life in France. One of a strong and active body, neither shrinking in *cold*, nor slothful in heat; going commonly with his head

* Sloane.

† Tyler's Life of Henry V.

uncovered, the wearing of armour was no more cumbersome to him than a cloak. He never shrank from a wound, nor turned away his nose for ill-savour, nor closed his eyes for smoke or dust. In diet none less dainty or more moderate; his sleep very short but sound. Fortunate in fight, and commendable in all his actions, verifying the proverb that 'An ill youth may make a good man.' ”*

CHAPTER XLI.

HENRY VI.—1422 to 1426.

TERMINATION OF THE SCHISM IN THE ROMAN CHURCH—COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE—AUTHORITY OF A GENERAL COUNCIL DECLARED TO BE ABOVE THAT OF THE POPE—SEVERE LAWS PASSED AGAINST HERESY—CONDEMNATION OF JEROME OF PRAGUE AND JOHN HUSS—MODERATION OF ROBERT HALLAM, BISHOP OF SALISBURY—HE DIES, AFTER HAVING LAID BEFORE THE COUNCIL A PLAN FOR THE REFORMATION OF THE CHURCH—STATE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT THE DEATH OF HENRY V.—ARCHBISHOP CHICHELEY'S LOYALTY—HIS SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT—HE RETIRES FROM PUBLIC LIFE, TO ATTEND TO THE WORK OF HIS DIOCESE—HIS LIBERALITY AND MUNIFICENCE—HENRY BEAUFORT, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER—HIS HAUGHTY AND AMBITIOUS CHARACTER—RIVALRY BETWEEN THE BISHOP AND DUKE HUMPHREY OF GLOUCESTER, THE PROTECTOR—DISGRACEFUL SCENES IN LONDON—ARCHBISHOP CHICHELEY COMES FORTH FROM HIS RETIREMENT TO TRY AND MAKE PEACE—UNMANLY CONDUCT OF THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER—HE ACCUSES THE PROTECTOR TO HIS BROTHER, THE DUKE OF BEDFORD—A TEMPORARY RECONCILIATION EFFECTED—CHICHELEY OUT OF FAVOUR WITH POPE MARTIN V.—THE PONTIFF'S ANGRY LETTER—THE PRIMATE HAD BEFORE OPPOSED THE NOMINATION OF HENRY BEAUFORT TO THE CARDINALATE, AND WAS SUPPORTED BY HENRY V.—POPE MARTIN FREELY EXPRESSES HIS INDIGNATION.

I MUST not forget to mention that during the reign of Henry V. the shameless schism which for nearly forty years had disgraced the Roman Church came to an end. Many efforts had been made to terminate the scandal, but up to this time none of them had been successful. A general council of the Church was at length called. It met at Constance, and was composed of bishops from Italy, France, Germany, England, and Spain, while a vast number of inferior clergy and laity were also present. The ecclesiastics alone numbered, we are told, no less than eighteen thousand.† At this time three popes held office. The council unanimously agreed that the most effectual way to *terminate* the schism would be to compel all three popes to *resign*, and then elect a fourth to fill the vacant chair. This

* Fuller.

† Hardwick's Church History, p. 554.

was accordingly done, and Otto di Colonna was elected, under the title of Martin V. His election, we are told, "caused an incredible joy over all Christendom, for every one thought that by this means the peace of the Church would be re-established."* Archbishop Chicheley communicated the joyful fact at a special synod, while public thanksgivings and solemn processions were held all over the country in honour of the event.

I would have you observe that at this famous Council of Constance the Pope's supremacy received a powerful check, for the authority of such a synod, or general meeting of the bishops and clergy of the Church, was declared of greater weight than the authority of the Pope, who was compelled to bow to its decrees. It is to be deplored that when so many holy and learned men met for so good an object, they should have disgraced their cause by passing very cruel laws for the punishment of heretics. Wiclif's opinions were not confined to our own country; they spread rapidly over the whole Continent, rousing the alarm and hatred of most of the bishops of the Church. I dare say you have heard the sad story of John Huss and Jerome of Prague. They were both of them moderate, but firm, true-hearted followers of John Wiclif, and their trial and condemnation is a lasting blot on this council of Christian bishops and priests. One man, at all events, would fain have adopted gentle means in dealing with the noble-minded Jerome. You will be glad to hear that this man was one of our English bishops. Robert Hallam, Bishop of Salisbury, was present during Jerome of Prague's first examination. The bold, uncompromising answers of the fearless Lollard roused the indignation of the assembled prelates, and many of them, in their zeal for what they believed to be the truth, loudly cried, "To the fire! to the fire with the heretic!" Jerome turned towards his accusers, and said, his voice trembling with emotion, "If ye seek my death, God's will be done." The good Bishop Hallam had not witnessed this scene unmoved. As Jerome uttered these words he rose, eagerly exclaiming, "No, Jerome; it is not God's will that any sinner should die, but that he should be converted and live."† Had it pleased God to prolong this good prelate's life for a brief space, his charitable and Christian remonstrances might possibly have influenced the other members of the council in showing mercy to these honest reformers. But Hallam died in that foreign land before Jerome of Prague was again brought before his accusers.‡

* *Duck's Life of Chicheley.*

† *Massingberd, p. 199.*

‡ *Lewis's Life of Bishop Pecock.*

After all I have said about this good prelate, you will not be surprised to hear that he was himself a reformer. His chief object in going to the council was to lay before the bishops a plan for the general reformation of the Church, which had been carefully drawn up by his learned Oxford friend, Richard Ullerston, who, although a strong opponent of the Lollards, was yet desirous to restore to the Church her original purity. After enumerating the chief abuses which had crept in, the document thus concludes: "Let the Popes keep within the bounds of their spiritual ministry, let things be brought into their natural order, and let abuses be cut off. Let the Pope employ himself, as befits his charge, in promoting peace among Christians, in preaching the Gospel himself, and sending everywhere good preachers to teach, both by their doctrine and example, to princes and people their different duties, and to make a holy war against those passions which are, as St. James says, the source of wars and divisions to Church and State."*

You see therefore that those who were opposed to the Lollards were yet desirous to remove those same abuses of which Wiclif and his followers complained.

Henry VI. was an infant of only eight months old when his good father died. Henry V. had on his death-bed intrusted the regency of France to his brother, the Duke of Bedford, while his brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, had much the same authority given him in England, which was to last until the infant King was of age to govern for himself. It was well for England that such a man as Archbishop Chicheley had a voice in the affairs of the nation. His loyalty and affection for his King and country were conspicuous on every occasion; while the holiness of his life, his stern impartiality, and strict honesty had gained him the respect of all parties. Chicheley's affection for Henry had been warm and sincere, and he deeply mourned his death. In his own arms he had held Henry's infant son at the font, and marked his forehead with God's holy sign; and now that his gallant father was gone, Chicheley bestowed all the warmth of his generous affection on the helpless infant, and determined to guard, guide, and faithfully support him on every occasion. His speech at the parliament called by Duke Humphrey breathes a spirit of true loyalty and affection to the throne. The words seem to come straight from his heart. After dwelling for some time with delight on the noble qualities of his friend and sovereign, Henry V., the *Primate* exhorted the people to be faithful to his son. Then he *told them* the Parliament had been summoned for three reasons.

* Massingberd.

First, to assign governors for the young King's person ; secondly, for keeping the peace and providing for the execution of the laws ; and thirdly, for the defence of the realm against foreign insults. "I would have you, my lords," he concludes, "follow the advice of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, and make choice of the wisest of the nobility to take upon him the government of the King and kingdom ; and I do beseech you to use your utmost endeavours for the safety of your King and benefit of your country."* But Chicheley, though he took a prominent part in state affairs, was not the man to neglect the more ordinary duties of his diocese. Possibly grief for the death of Henry, as well as more unselfish motives, induced him at this time to retire from court and confine himself to his sacred duties. "For Chicheley," we read, "having lost his King and patron, who had advanced him to the highest honours, and who had dearly loved him, when parliament was dissolved, retired to the bounds of his province, in which he performed the duties of his function with great diligence."† Like William of Wykeham, Archbishop Chicheley was a public benefactor. He was one of the most liberal and munificent of our English primates, and founded many noble and useful institutions. "He understood," says a writer whom I have often quoted, "the true use of a great fortune, and spent his estates upon the encouragement of learning, the interest of religion, and the relief of the poor."‡ At this time he made a careful visitation of his whole diocese. During his progress, he visited Higham Ferrars in Lincolnshire, his birthplace. To a man of Chicheley's affectionate nature, it must have been a great pleasure to revisit the haunts of his childhood. He certainly showed his regard for them in a very wise and sensible manner. In the old country town of Higham Ferrars there rose a noble college, built at the sole expense of the generous Primate. It was dedicated to the honour of the blessed Virgin, to Edward the Confessor, and St. Thomas à Becket. Chicheley, not content with this costly tribute to the memory of his beloved home, built also a large hospital, besides bestowing on the town a considerable sum of money for the relief of its poor. Thus did this excellent man show his affection for his Master, "not only in word but in deed."

I must soon introduce you to a prelate who, at this time, took a very prominent part in public affairs—Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester. You have read of a great many disinterested and noble-minded prelates, and therefore, when an *unworthy one* appears upon the scene, I should be giving you a

* *Duck's Life of Chicheley.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Collier.*

false and biassed notion of the bishops of the Church if I omitted to tell you about him. A picture without light and shade loses all its depth and meaning. For as the dark shadows in a painting make the lights more brilliant and prominent, so in history, evil characters contrast with the good ones, and make the latter all the more bright and lovable. Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, was a son of the famous John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who, you remember, took such an active part in state affairs during the reign of Edward III. and Richard II. He was the Duke's son by a third wife, and therefore half-brother to Henry IV. Conscious of his illustrious birth, and governed by headstrong passions, this proud prelate inherited all the ambition and haughtiness of his father, and now determined to take advantage of the minority of the King to raise himself into power. He was clearly no patriot, or he would never have allowed his country to suffer from his own selfish ambition. He hated the good Protector, Duke Humphrey, with all the vehemence of his passionate nature; and regarding with jealousy the post he occupied, determined, if possible, to overthrow him. Henry Beaufort, when his mind was once made up, was by no means scrupulous in the means he employed to gain his end. The restless and dissatisfied soon gladly owned him for their leader, and the City of London became the scene of the most disgraceful series of riots, God's minister of peace becoming the author of confusion and violence. The Protector was compelled in self-defence to take up arms, and the unfortunate Londoners suffered. We are told that the disturbance soon became so formidable that the honest citizens were compelled to shut up their shops and defend themselves against the lawless rabble, who, glad of an opportunity for pillaging and murder, always collect together on such occasions. Archbishop Chicheley was not the man to sit down quietly or refuse to interpose when his country was in danger. Although he had retired from public life, he promptly appeared upon the scene, now that his services were required. You remember that well-known passage of Holy Writ which says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."* On this occasion, Archbishop Chicheley showed himself a true peacemaker. Regardless of his own ease and comfort, he diligently strove to reconcile the contending nobles, riding from one to the other no less than eight times in one day. His Christian efforts were at length rewarded. He succeeded in prevailing on the angry nobles to dismiss their troops, and so order was restored.

* St. Matthew v. 9.

But, unhappily, this season of quiet was but of brief duration. The Bishop of Winchester's restless ambition was still unsatisfied, and he basely wrote letters to the Duke of Bedford (who, you remember, was Regent in France), accusing the honest Protector of various crimes. He significantly hinted that, unless the Duke speedily made his appearance in England, the King's interests would soon be ruined by the Duke of Gloucester's misconduct. Now Duke Humphrey, like all great men, had his faults; but they were clearly not those which this false prelate imputed to him. He was an honest patriot, and had the good of his King and country at heart, and indignantly repudiated the charges brought against him. The Duke of Bedford, on receipt of the Bishop's letter, most reluctantly hurried home, and calling a Parliament at Leicester, adroitly managed, by aid of the Primate and other Bishops and nobles, to heal the difference. The Duke of Gloucester and Henry Beaufort shook hands, and outward peace was for a time restored. Archbishop Chicheley was far too patriotic a man to remain long in favour with the Pope, and soon incurred the heavy displeasure of Martin V. It appears that Chicheley had approved of the Statute of Provisors, which, you remember, forbade the Pope to interfere in any way with the election of the English clergy, and both he and Henry had joined in enforcing it. His holiness, though boiling with indignation at this insult offered to his authority, had not dared, during Henry's lifetime, openly to express his opinion, for he knew full well the resolute character of the English King. Now, however, that Henry was gone, Chicheley had lost his protector, and the long pent-up wrath of his holiness burst forth.

The Primate received an angry letter of remonstrance from the Court of Rome. The quaint mixture of pettishness and wounded pride which pervades this amusing document sounds ridiculous enough to our ears, although, I dare say, it was no laughing matter to Archbishop Chicheley. I think one or two extracts from this irate letter will entertain you: "Martin, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, to his reverend brother, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Greeting and apostolical benediction. Did you consider what a strict account you must give to Almighty God for the flock committed to your care? Did you recollect the obligations of your pastoral office, and how much you are bound to support the rights and honour of the Roman Church, of whom you own your jurisdiction and dignity? Were these things duly recollected, your conduct would by no means have been so sleepy and negligent. No, you would have appeared *upon duty*, long since endeavoured to retrieve the misled, and opposed those to the utmost who have made a sacrilegious inva-

sion upon the privileges settled by our Saviour on the Roman Church. Is this then your manner of showing your love for Christ? Is this feeding and taking care of the flock? Alas! your flock are running down a precipice before your face, and yet you seem to overlook the danger, and make no attempt to retrieve them. You suffer them to feed upon dangerous plants without warning; and, which is horribly surprising, you seem to put poison to their mouths with your own hands. You can look on and see the wolves scatter and pull them in pieces; and, like a 'dumb dog,' not so much as bark upon the occasion. You can see the authority of our Blessed Saviour and the Apostolic See despised and trampled on, without so much as dropping one word of remonstrance. Now one would have thought you might at least have whispered your dislike, if you had been so very prudential as not to have declared it publicly. I desire that you would consider whether such statutes as these are for the honour of the kingdom; consider whether it becomes you to be silent under all this outrage. Is this an instance of filial reverence? Is this the people of England's way of showing their regards to their mother Church, and the Apostolic See? Can that be called a Catholic kingdom where such profane laws are made and practised; where application to the Vicar of Christ is prohibited; where the successor of St. Peter is not allowed to execute his commission? And you, who ought to have set up the Church's standard, been most forward in the defence of religion, and animated your fellow-bishops to a noble contest, are the first to turn your back, and decline the service, and thus either by your cowardice, by your neglect, or downright prevarication, as is generally believed, you discourage those who were resolved to make a stand."

If we imagine that Archbishop Chicheley was disposed to support the Pope in his attempt on the liberty of the English Church, such a letter as this clearly contradicts such a notion. Pope Martin certainly seems to have had a peculiar grudge against Chicheley, who had contrived on another occasion to displease his holiness. For a long time it had been the darling project of the haughty and ambitious Bishop of Winchester to be created a Cardinal by the Pope. I must tell you that Cardinals were very important personages in the Roman Church, for they were its chief governors, and ranked next to the Pope himself.* During the vacancy of the Holy See, the Cardinals possessed absolute power. They alone had the right to elect a *Pope*, and were themselves the only persons on whom the choice *could fall*. It was, therefore, no contemptible prize that Henry

* Dr. Hook's Church Dictionary.

Beaufort strove to win. To his great satisfaction, Pope Martin showed himself ready and willing to recognize his claim, for he foresaw that the ambitious and resolute prelate would be likely to prove a useful agent of the Court of Rome. Archbishop Chicheley had the discernment to perceive this also; and he wrote letters, we are told, "in a grave and moderate style," to Henry V., who was then in France, in which he represented that "the Pope's legates did derogate greatly from the dignity of the King, from the laws of the land, and the privileges of the Church of England." And he besought Henry to oppose the Bishop's nomination to the dignity of Cardinal. Henry had so high an opinion of the Primate's good sense, that he at once acknowledged the force of his argument. "Ay, marry!" he exclaimed, "I would rather Henry Beaufort should wear the Crown than the Cardinal's cap."* Henry, we are told, knew well the unrestrained ambition of the man; "that from his very youth he had ever checked at the highest; and perceiving with what intolerable pride his head would soon be swollen under such a hat, did keep the prelate back from such presumptuous estate."†

Unfortunately, after Henry's death, Chicheley had to struggle single-handed against the Pope and prelate; and while Henry Beaufort was rejoicing in his Cardinal's hat, the Pope was considering how he could best humble the spirited and patriotic Primate, who under all difficulties had boldly and fearlessly spoken out his mind.

* Duck's Life of Chicheley.

† Holinshed.

CHAPTER XLII.

HENRY VI. *continued.*—1426 to 1452.

ARCHBISHOP CHICHELEY AGAIN OFFENDS POPE MARTIN—SUBMISSION OF CHICHELEY AND THE ENGLISH CLERGY—THEIR CONDUCT CONSIDERED—CHICHELEY REFUSES TO SUBMIT TO THE POPE'S CARDINAL—SPIRITED CONDUCT OF THE ENGLISH—DISCOMFITURE OF THE PAPAL LEGATE—THE POPE'S REMONSTRANCE TO THE DUKE OF BEDFORD—DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF BASIL—UNWISE CONDUCT OF THE POPES—DEATH OF ARCHBISHOP CHICHELEY—HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE YOUNG KING—HE INFLUENCES HIM FOR GOOD—CHARACTER OF HENRY VI. CONSIDERED—HIS AFFECTION AND RESPECT FOR CHICHELEY—ASSASSINATION OF DUKE HUMPHREY—DEATH OF CARDINAL BEAUFORT—THEIR CHARACTERS COMPARED—DISORDERED STATE OF THE KINGDOM AFTER THE DEATH OF THE PRIMATE AND THE PROTECTOR—HENRY'S CONDUCT—HE LEAVES HIS ENERGETIC CONSORT, MARGARET OF ANJOU, TO STRUGGLE WITH THE RESTLESS AND AMBITIOUS NOBLES—RICHARD, DUKE OF YORK, AIMS AT THE CROWN—HIS POPULARITY—WARS OF THE "ROSES"—HENRY REFUSES TO ENCOURAGE THE POPE—ARCHBISHOP STAFFORD—CHICHELEY'S OPINION OF HIS CHARACTER—CRAFTY CONDUCT OF THE POPE'S LEGATE—HIS DESIGNS FRUSTRATED.

ARCHBISHOP CHICHELEY further offended Pope Martin, by openly expressing his belief that his holiness's apparent zeal for the honour of the Church was merely a cloak to cover his real intention, which was to extort as large a sum of money as possible from the English. Martin was in great wrath: "Such an imputation as this," he exclaimed, "is both false and injurious; my only design is to maintain that jurisdiction which our Saviour has annexed to my See, and to guard those privileges which the holy Fathers, the Councils, and Catholic Church have always acknowledged."

Another furious letter arrived in England from the Court of Rome, addressed to the two Archbishops of Canterbury and York; and, in order to mortify Chicheley, the Archbishop of York was named before him. The Primate was too high-minded a man to be disturbed by so petty an act of spitefulness; but he appears to have shrunk from incurring the wrath of the Pontiff, and involving his country in an interdict. We cannot help regretting that he should have endeavoured to avert the impending storm by compromising the matter. He sent a submissive letter to Martin, excusing his conduct, and promising obedience in future. His letter was accompanied by one from the Archbishop of York, which was signed by several other Bishops, who did their best to mollify the Pope's anger, and *dispose him favourably towards their popular Primate, whom they described as universally honoured by the whole nation; and*

“England’s Golden Candlestick.” “His example,” say they, “is so admirable a rule of practice, that we entreat your holiness not to believe the whispers of wicked men against so unexceptionable a prelate.”

We must not deal hardly with these Bishops, nor imagine they were acting a mean and cowardly part in thus tendering their submission to the Roman Pontiff. Archbishop Chicheley was a man of peace; he hated strife and contention, and therefore was willing to yield somewhat, to avoid an open rupture with the Church of Rome. You must bear in mind, also, that, in common with the rest of his countrymen, the Primate still owned the Pope as chief Bishop of the Christian Church, although, together with the other prelates, he jealously guarded the freedom of his Church, when the Pontiff would overstep the due bounds of his authority. We have seen that for centuries the Popes had been regarded as the Spiritual Fathers of the Christian Church. Indeed, as Fuller humorously remarks, “it was the epidemical disease” in those days. We cannot be surprised, therefore, that Chicheley should have shrunk from rudely snapping a bond which had been so long regarded as sacred. It is folly to suppose our forefathers might have acted as we should, if the Pope again tried to assert his claims. The case is altogether different. For then the whole world acknowledged the spiritual supremacy of the Pope; now a great part of it has rejected it.

So great a change could not be wrought in one day; it was the gradual work of ages, and things were as yet not fully ripe for the crisis. Because the more ancient and scriptural system, under which we live now, was not then re-established, we have no right to blame or look with contempt on those who lived under a less favoured system of religion. To prove to you, however, that Chicheley was not the man to cringe with servile submission to the Pope, I shall briefly relate what took place between him and the Archbishop of York a few years afterwards. Kempe, Archbishop of York, had, you remember, shown his good will towards Chicheley by representing him to the Pope as “England’s Golden Candlestick,” and a man well worthy of his holiness’s forgiveness. One is therefore sorry when the two archbishops appear upon the scene as rivals. There is no cause, however, to believe that the quarrel was a personal one. It appears that Kempe, having been created cardinal by Pope Eugenius, Martin’s successor, considered himself of greater importance to the Church than the Primate; and of course it was to the Pope’s advantage to support Kempe in this. Chicheley, however, determined to assert the rights of his own see; and although he

may have valued the friendship of the Archbishop of York, he was not disposed to submit to the Pope's ambitious schemes. He declared that no prelate had a right to precede him in his diocese; and that therefore the pretensions of the Roman cardinals signified nothing in the province of Canterbury. The Pope tried his best to win Chicheley over—for he dared not threaten—and sent a crafty letter of persuasion and remonstrance, in which he exalted the august office of cardinal, endeavouring to strengthen his argument by affirming that Moses, and St. Peter also, if they had not actually instituted the order of cardinals, had at least hinted at the existence of such persons. "For the whole Church," shrewdly remarks his holiness, "turneth upon them, as upon its hinges." He concludes by exhorting the Archbishop "to submit to the customs of the Church of Rome, and give place to the cardinals, promising him and the whole See of Canterbury all the kindnesses that could be expected from a most affectionate father."* But Chicheley, proof against the Pope's paternal remonstrance, "stood up," we are told, for the liberties of the Church of England, and "had courage enough to oppose the invasions of the Court of Rome."†

To go back again for a time. In the year 1429, Pope Martin, assisted by Cardinal Beaufort, endeavoured to raise funds in England for carrying on a foreign war against the heretics in Bohemia. Our countrymen appear to have had strong doubts as to the righteousness of his holiness's cause; for although the clergy of England had just before granted a liberal subsidy to the French Regent, the Duke of Bedford, they steadily refused to recognise the Pope's claim, and his legate was obliged to retire. Pope Martin was further mortified by hearing that his legate, having attempted to collect money in England, had been seized by the daring natives, and committed to prison. Knowing it was useless to appeal to Chicheley, Pope Martin in despair wrote to the Duke of Bedford, and in strong language declared that his nuncio "had been more coarsely used in a Christian country than he could have been among Turks or Saracens. It is a hideous reproach," says he, "to the English, thus to fall short of infidels in justice and humanity. Verily, it is to be feared that, should they not speedily reform their manners, some heavy judgment will fall upon them."

But it was not in England alone that the papal power received a check. In the year 1430, another very important Church council was held at Basil, or Basle, in Switzerland. "For,"

* Duck's Life of Chicheley.

† Collier, vol. iii., p. 357.

remarks Fuller, with his usual vivacity, "seeing the Church was subject to contract rust in doctrine and manners, frequency of councils was conceived the best way to scour the same." The popes, however, by no means approved of thus being thrust into the background; for as at the Council of Constance, so now, it was decreed, "that a general council doth derive its authority from Christ, and the Pope is subject to it. He hath no power to remove or prorogue it; for the supreme government of the Church is committed to a council, and not to the Pope." Such words as these, conveying, as they do, so true and primitive a sentiment, are very remarkable, and show us that the general desire for reformation was growing stronger and stronger every year. Had the Roman pontiffs been wise, they would surely have opened their eyes to the necessity of some change, instead of blindly running counter to the feeling of the age, which was both just and reasonable. By their obstinate persistence in unsound doctrine and practice, the bishops of Rome became the cause, as we shall presently see, of the most deplorable divisions in the Church of Christ.

Pope Eugenius, as I before said, succeeded Martin in the papal chair. On discovering the intentions of the council, he did all in his power to overthrow it. For the bishops and clergy, among other things, met for the express purpose of reforming the Church Universal, "both in its head, the popes, and in its members, the bishops, priests, and monks." I should weary you were I to enter into the long struggle which now ensued between the Pope and the council. It was only terminated by the death of Eugenius, in 1447. His successor, Nicholas V., being a man of peace, preferred sanctioning the decrees of the council; and so for a time tranquillity was restored.

I shall not here enter upon the troublous events which soon took place in France. You have read in the history of England how on the death of the good regent, John, Duke of Bedford, the English gradually lost all their hard-won possessions in that country; nor were affairs in England in a much better condition. In the year 1443 Archbishop Chicheley died. It was a sad day for England and its young king, when the bells tolled mournfully for the good Primate, who had so nobly and fearlessly performed his duty: for, as the Archbishop's biographer justly remarks, "the kingdom, which had been supported by his counsel, fell with him."* To young Henry the loss was irreparable. Of a gentle and dependent disposition, he had ever leant for guidance and support on the Primate; for Chicheley's

* Duck's Life of Chicheley.

decision of character and stern conscientiousness had supplied to Henry the confidence and strength he so much needed.

I showed you that Henry V. possessed all the qualities of a gallant warrior, with the deep and earnest faith of a true Christian. Henry VI. inherited the gentle side of his father's character, his simple faith, his love for religion; but he utterly lacked his decision and strength of mind. It was his misfortune to live in very troublous times, and he proved altogether unequal to them. Had Henry VI. been a poor man, all would have honoured his simple habits and deep piety. But he possessed none of those qualities which make a wise king, and therefore his memory has been most unjustly loaded with opprobrium. Our Saviour has said, "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." These words have ever been stumbling-blocks to those who would make idols of their own wisdom and strength of character; and the man who sneers at that child-like spirit of faith and meekness which Christ approves would discover in Henry's character only what is weak and contemptible. In this, as in other cases, we should do well to recal to mind the words of the wise man of old, who says, "He that hath small understanding, and feareth God, is better than one that hath much wisdom, and transgresseth the law of the Most High."* As a king, Henry's failings all appear upon the surface, and have come down to us; while those pure and saintlike qualities, which, in the sight of God, are beyond all price, have been either altogether overlooked, or treated with disdain. It speaks well for Henry, that at so early an age he could admire and appreciate the character of a man like Chicheley. We read that his love and reverence for the Primate were very great. He was, says Chicheley's biographer, accustomed to call the Archbishop "godfather," and always paid him a great deal of respect. "The young king," continues the same writer, "was very favourably inclined towards the good of the Church, and the encouragement of learning." Henry fully supported Chicheley in his efforts for the public good, watching with extreme interest the progress of all his godfather's undertakings, and giving him money with a liberal hand. Enough has been said of this good Primate to show you that he was a man of whom any age or country might well be proud; for at this distant period of time we are deriving benefit from his princely liberality and noble taste. Troublous times were now dawning on England. In the year 1446, the good *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester*, was found dead in his bed. The *English* people mourned his loss with unfeigned sorrow; for,

* Ecclesiasticus xix. 24.

by his liberality and condescending manners, he had won the hearts both of rich and poor. Cardinal Beaufort, Duke Humphrey's haughty rival, shortly afterwards followed him to the grave. No two men could be more entirely unlike than the Protector and the Cardinal. The Duke of Gloucester was a true patriot. He cared little for himself, but was zealous for the public good. While he encouraged learning, and bestowed large sums of money on the foundation of useful institutions, the Cardinal's chief aim was to enrich himself, and inspire the people with an exalted notion of his greatness. But true greatness consists not in exalting ourselves, but in performing deeds worthy of our Christian calling, and in benefiting others. It is only in this way that we can hope for the favour of God, or the affection of our fellow-beings. Cardinal Beaufort was styled indeed the "rich Cardinal;" but who would not rather covet the title of the man he hated and despised? The "good Duke Humphrey," as the people loved to call him, was carried to the grave, followed by the tears and blessings of many a grateful heart; while the "rich Cardinal" went to his last resting-place surrounded by all the pomp and ceremony he had valued in his lifetime. Yet one thing was lacking, worth more than this outward display—the grateful tears of men whose minds had been ennobled by his influence and example.

I fear the character which Holinshed gives of Cardinal Beaufort is not exaggerated; he thus speaks: "This prelate was more noble in blood than notable in bearing; haughty in stomach, and high in countenance, rich above measure, but not very liberal, disdainful of his kin, preferring money before friendship, many things beginning, but few performing, saving in malice and mischief. His insatiable covetousness, and hope of being great, made him forget his God, his prince, and himself."

After the Protector's death, the affairs of the nation became involved in the most hopeless state of disorder. The powerful nobles who surrounded Henry's court, intent only on carrying out their own selfish and ambitious schemes, regarded with disdain a sovereign who was utterly powerless either to lead or to awe them. Nor could their king's saintlike character and conduct make them relinquish the sinful pleasures in which they indulged. To Henry's pure and peace-loving mind the frivolities and contentions of his court were unbearable. He retired more and more within himself, leaving the chief management of affairs to his spirited and energetic consort, Margaret of Anjou, who, with a temper as enterprising and ambitious as her husband's was meek and yielding, gladly seized the reins of government, and proved a match for the most powerful and am-

bitious of the nobles. A blight seems to hang over the descendants of the usurper, Henry of Hereford; but it was not until the days of his unfortunate grandson that the national misfortunes reached a climax. For many years the bloody wars of York and Lancaster desolated the land; while the good of the Church and the welfare of the country were made to give place to the cruel and ambitious designs of worldly and reckless men.

Richard, Duke of York, a man of great courage, was descended from Lionel, Duke of Clarence, second son of Edward III.; while Henry was, as you may remember, great-grandson to the Duke of Lancaster, the third son of that monarch. There can be no doubt that Richard's claim was the more just of the two; but while owning this, one cannot but despise the man, who, while honoured and trusted by his sovereign, treacherously plans and effects his ruin. Henry, fully convinced of the Duke's loyalty and attachment to his person, gave him the command of an army, which was sent into Ireland to suppress a rebellion there. Richard had long coveted the crown, to which he considered he had a just right; and when an opportunity offered, he was not slow to seize it. His courtly manners and brave bearing soon won the hearts of the Irish; while, in the meantime, many restless and ambitious Englishmen, wearied with Henry's imbecility and want of decision, gladly promised to support Richard in his claim. And so the disastrous civil wars of the red and white roses were set on foot; the account of which I shall leave you to read in the history of England, while I relate the events which took place at this time in the Church.

Henry VI., though of a gentle and yielding nature, was by no means disposed, like some of our weak sovereigns, to favour the Pope's claim. It appears, that in a fit of good-nature he had made Pope Nicholas V. a present of a consecrated rose. In this gift the Pope saw an earnest of future favours, and so he determined to push his advantage. He began by attempting to levy a tax on the English clergy. But the King was not altogether so passive as his holiness expected. He strictly commanded the Archbishop of Canterbury not to execute the Pope's bull, nor promote the collection of the money. John Stafford, Chicheley's successor in the primacy, was a man of eminent learning, and a clever statesman; that he was highly esteemed by Chicheley is sufficient proof of his virtue and ability. That great man himself proposed Stafford as his successor, and thus speaks of him: "*I believe him to be,*" says Chicheley, "*a man of the greatest merit, and in all respects best qualified for the See of Canterbury.*"

Besides his eminent learning and other qualifications, the nobleness of his birth,* the superiority of his relations, and the interest he has gained by his hospitality, are still further motives to prefer him to the post. Indeed, I believe that no other person could support that character to such advantage, or prove so serviceable to the Church, as this prelate."† Stafford was a patriot; he gladly supported the King in his resistance to the Pope, and a few years afterwards the Pontiff's ambitious schemes were again signally defeated. In the year 1452, the Primate summoned a convocation in London, to acquaint the lords and clergy of the sad state of affairs in France. He declared that unless they came forward liberally to assist the King with their purses, the noble inheritance which Henry V. had won at such cost would be inevitably lost to England. Clemens Vincentius, the papal legate, was present, and like a true servant eagerly watched his master's interests. When he found that convocation gladly granted their sovereign the assistance he needed, Clemens hoped they might also be induced to favour his holiness. He therefore wisely determined to strike while the iron was hot. It appears that Nicholas had lately escaped from a dangerous conspiracy, which occurrence the nuncio, with crafty adroitness, determined to turn to his master's advantage, hoping to inspire the minds of all present with a feeling of compassion for his holiness. Of course, as usual, money was more needed than compassion; but the nuncio knew well it was needful that so unpalatable a subject should be delicately handled; and the crafty way in which he introduced it gives us a notion that he must have been a very "wise man in his generation," if not a holy one. "His holiness," exclaimed Clemens, "has escaped a great and terrible danger; the conspiracy of Stephen Porchar has been, by the blessing of Divine Providence, suppressed; but," he continued, "the prayers of the faithful are needed, therefore his holiness desired that this convocation draw up a form of prayer, to be used throughout the province of Canterbury, for the preservation of the Pope and conclave; surely also," he added, "a letter from the English clergy to his holiness upon the subject would be taken very kindly; and if," said he, lowering his voice, as he approached the obnoxious subject, "such a letter comes recommended with the promise of a supply, there is no question that the Pope will have the greatest esteem imaginable for the English clergy." The unpleasant dose had, it is true, been cleverly concealed, but the taste was as nauseous as ever to English palates. The

* Stafford was brother to the earl of that name.

† Collier, vol. iii., p. 388.

crafty artifice of Clemens was easily discovered, and, as usual, rejected with scorn. The nuncio, forced to content himself with the prayers of the faithful, returned to Rome with an empty purse.

CHAPTER XLIII.

HENRY VI. *continued.*—1452 to 1460.

REGINALD PECOCK, BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH—HIS OPINIONS CONSIDERED—HE OPPOSES THE PERSECUTING SPIRIT OF THE AGE—ENDEAVOURS TO WIN THE LOLLARDS OVER TO THE CHURCH BY ARGUMENT—TROUBLOUS STATE OF THE KINGDOM—AMBITION OF THE DUKE OF YORK—HE LAYS CLAIM TO THE CROWN—COURAGE AND ENERGY OF MARGARET OF ANJOU—THE DUKE OF YORK INSTIGATES THE PEOPLE TO REBEL AGAINST HENRY—MURDER OF AYSCOUGH, BISHOP OF SALISBURY, AND MOLENS, BISHOP OF CHICHESTER—REGINALD PECOCK ELECTED TO THE SEE OF CHICHESTER—HE INCURS THE DISPLEASURE OF THE HEADS OF THE CHURCH BY THE OPINIONS HE PUTS FORTH WITH REGARD TO HOLY SCRIPTURE—PECOCK'S VIEW OF THE SUBJECT CONSIDERED—RIGHT METHOD OF STUDYING GOD'S WORD.

IN writing the history of the English Church, I must not forget to tell you about Reginald Pecock, Bishop of St. Asaph, whose opinions made a great stir at this time. Pecock was one of those bold men who, regardless of consequences, have the hardihood to maintain opinions contrary to the rest of their countrymen. This prelate, like most men who endeavour to take a middle course, found favour with no one. His history affords a sad instance of the extremes to which an unwise zeal and persecuting spirit will carry those who are governed by it. Pecock was in high favour with Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who had the sense to appreciate the Bishop's enlightened views, and joined with him in deprecating the violent measures taken by the Church in exterminating heresy. It was to show his respect for Pecock that the Duke of Gloucester, in 1444, created him Bishop of St. Asaph. Pecock had long felt dissatisfied with the way in which the Lollards had been treated; and he now boldly proclaimed that, in his opinion, "the clergy would be condemned at the last day, if they did not draw men in to consent to the true faith otherwise than by sword or hanging." Bishop Pecock was a learned and able man as well as a true *Christian*, and it is evident from these words, that so far from countenancing the errors of the Lollards, he was fully alive to them. He only desired to draw them to the true faith, by gentle rather than by severe measures, feeling convinced that in

such a case "persuasion was far better than force." In order to carry out what he believed to be the wisest course, Pecock published certain tracts, in which he ably endeavoured to confute the errors of the Lollards, and reconcile them to the Church, from which he firmly believed no person had a right to separate himself. Among other things, the followers of Wiclif had always maintained that the Bible was the only sure guide, and that no doctrine which could not be proved from its sacred pages need be believed as necessary to salvation. As far as it went, this opinion was sound; but, unfortunately, not content with this, they refused to conform to certain customs of the Church, because such customs could not be shown to be clearly commanded in God's Word. Thus they cast discredit, as we have seen, on the observance of the Lord's Day, because the *first* day of the week was not actually commanded in the Bible to be kept holy; although, you remember, it is especially stated that on several occasions the disciples met together on that day, to commemorate their Lord's resurrection by prayer and praise. Bishop Pecock was a large-hearted reformer. He agreed with the "Bible men," as he called the Lollards, in honouring Scripture; but at the same time, he would fain have them value the privileges which the Church held out to them, and honour her as the keeper and preserver of Holy Writ. He believed, what all true churchmen believe now, that "every good and every perfect gift is from above," and that the same God who has bestowed on His children the inestimable gift of His Holy Word gives them also the blessing of a divinely-constituted Church. In flying from the traditions of Rome, he showed the Lollards that they had run into the equally dangerous extreme of setting the authority of the Church altogether at defiance. Our Church in those days was not without its errors and superstitions, and Pecock was not altogether blind to them; but he sought to lead the people up by gentle means to a more enlightened faith and practice. It is better that a Church, if possible, should be quietly and soberly reformed, than torn and rent by endless schisms. I will now quote a few extracts from the writings of this excellent man. I feel sure it will interest you to hear what view an enlightened churchman of that day could take of those customs which were then universally regarded as sacred. Pecock appears to have approved of pilgrimages to holy spots, if rightly used, for he endeavoured to overcome the dislike which the Lollards had taken to such observances. After arguing in favour of pilgrimages, he concludes with the following excellent advice: "*For those,*" says the Bishop, "*who cannot hear or read the Word of God, the use of images and pilgrimages is good;*

yet I would have no one neglect better exercises, or allow their reverence for such things to absorb all their leisure for hearing and reading the Word of God. For as the sun passeth in clearness, heat, and comfort the moon, and as a great torch passeth a little candle, so in these points reading and hearing God's Word passeth in clearness of teaching and in comfort; giving strength for to do and suffer for God more than all such visible signs devised by man." Again, with regard to the use of images in churches, he says: "The using of such 'rememorative'* signs is not reprov'd by any ground of faith, nor by Holy Scripture, nor by long use of the churches believing, nor by any miracle of God's working; but," he concludes, "I wholly condemn such things if worshipp'd as God, or in the place of God."†

Pecock has, I believe, most unjustly been accused of under-rating the ordinance of preaching, having asserted, as his enemies declared, "that no bishop, by virtue of his character, is bound to preach in his diocese."‡ Pecock's own words are the best refutation of so false an assertion. It is true he calls the friars "pulpit brawlers," and sets his face against their unauthorised interference with parish priests. But, at the same time, you will see by the following statement that he advocates preaching as necessary, if not upheld at the expense of other duties. "Although bishops," he says, "ought not to be hindered by preaching from the better work of their ordinary cure, yet every bishop is obliged to preach the truths of Holy Scripture, and pertinaciously to utter and explain them." "Accordingly," says the Bishop's biographer, "he not only took care that such preaching should be in his own diocese, but often preached himself, although he considered teaching rather the higher duty of the two."§ Pecock was further accused of encouraging the bishops to live away from their dioceses; but it appears that he only held "that bishops were very profitable and necessary to the state. Therefore, when summoned to attend to public affairs, this was a reasonable cause for absence."

You will have seen from what I have told you of this good bishop, that, for the most part, his views were just and reasonable. His character has, I think, been unjustly dealt with. He hated extremes of any kind, and so incurred the wrath of both parties. In order, therefore, to do Pecock justice, I have generally quoted his own words. Yet it is only fair towards Pecock's accusers to state, that so long as he confined himself to

* He means signs which remind us of something heavenly, or religious "symbols."

† Lewis's *Life of Pecock*.

‡ Collier.

§ Lewis's *Life of Pecock*.

refuting the errors of the Lollards, he was allowed to remain in peace, although he upheld a new system of dealing with them. But when he began to attack the extreme views of the Church party, he became a marked man, and laid himself open to the old charge of heresy. No good man is perfect either in his opinions or in his practice, and therefore I am not going to tell you that all Pecock's views were true and scriptural. He erred in some respects, but in the main his teaching accorded with Scripture and with the primitive Church. The bishops of the time clearly did wrong in persecuting Pecock. But there is every excuse to be made for such an error in judgment. The extreme opinions of the Lollards, their rebellion, and open schism, had naturally alarmed the bishops; and they were in no mood to regard with complacency any deviation, however slight, from the received customs of the Church.

Before I tell you what befel Pecock, after he became Bishop of Chichester, I must briefly relate what took place with regard to state affairs. The Duke of York, with a duplicity quite unworthy of so great a man, now endeavoured by every means in his power to ruin Henry, and to "bring him into the hatred of the people." In the year 1455 Parliament met. Henry at that time lay sick. Mind and body had sunk beneath the trials and vexations which surrounded him. Richard, Duke of York, taking advantage of the King's imbecility, induced the people to acknowledge him as Protector. It was but the stepping-stone to something higher; although, for the present, it was agreed that Henry should still reign in "name and dignity." There is little doubt that Richard, had he dared, would have gone yet further. Expediency alone, not a feeling of humanity, kept back the enemies of the unfortunate King from a deed of yet deeper guilt. "They would not destroy Henry," we are told, "lest they should suddenly provoke the fury of the common people; because of the common people, he was, for the holiness of his life, and abundant clemency, much favoured, and highly esteemed." Had Henry been allowed to act for himself, there is little doubt that he would gladly have resigned a crown which had brought him little else but misery and vexation. But Queen Margaret was of a very different opinion. With all a man's boldness and resolution, she determined to struggle to the last for the rights of her husband and her son. The indomitable courage of Margaret of Anjou, her dauntless perseverance, her unceasing energy, the way in which she refused to give up hope when all hope of success was gone, are facts *which excite our wonder, and kindle our admiration.* An old writer, who appears to have had a special grudge against all

women, owns that Margaret was no ordinary specimen of her sex. After dwelling on the overwhelming misfortunes which befel her, he adds, "yet did this indefatigable Queen lose nothing of her spirit or endeavours. Even her discomfiture and the revolt of her adherents were able, perhaps, to break her fortune, but not her." He concludes with the following characteristic moral reflection: "Such is surely the fate of all women who usurp over their husbands; great undertakings being seldom successful in that sex, whose government over man, as in nature, it is monstrous; so, for the most part, in itself it hath been disorderly and ruinous."*

Meanwhile, it must be acknowledged that the proceedings of the Yorkist party were mean and underhanded. One can respect a man who in fair and open fight claims his rights; but Richard, Duke of York, endeavoured to undermine the authority of his rival. His character, therefore, is despicable, and his cause, though a just one, was dishonoured by the unworthy means he employed. Regardless of the misery he inflicted on his country, Richard's aim was to stir up the people against their gentle sovereign; that, when their evil passions were fully roused, they might inflict summary vengeance on those who remained loyal to Henry, and so in the end open the way to the Crown. Richard accordingly caused a report to be spread that the King's party had connived at the death of the "good Duke Humphrey." To fix the blame on Henry himself he knew would be useless. His saintlike character shielded him from such suspicion; for all the people would have repudiated such a notion with indignation. But Queen Margaret was by no means so popular as her husband; and the people were soon induced to believe that her ambitious nature could not rest satisfied until every obstacle which stood between her and the government had been removed. Whatever may have been the guilty schemes of some of the Lancastrian party, I believe Margaret of Anjou herself to have been entirely guiltless of the Duke of Gloucester's assassination. But the common people did not take the trouble to reason the matter out; and, influenced by the Duke's plausible arguments, and fascinated by his condescending manners, the people of Kent rose in open rebellion, declaring that they would avenge the Protector's death.

In this rebellion of Jack Cade, the bishops and higher orders were as usual the chief sufferers. The Duke of York appears to have had a personal grudge against all prelates. "Good people," said he to the insurgents, "ye are surely

great losers by these bishops not residing at their dioceses.

* Habington's Life of Edward IV.

Ye have need to bring them to a sense of their duty, for now they neither do alms nor keep hospitality among their people, but lavish all their wealth elsewhere." The Duke knew full well the effect which such a speech would have on a lawless and excited rabble. In all ages the reckless and irreligious are only too glad of an excuse to throw off the restraints of religion. A crusade against God's ministers is always popular with the ignorant and profane; and on this occasion several good and learned prelates fell victims to the rage of the insurgents. William Ayscough, Bishop of Salisbury, the King's confessor, was a holy and consistent man, and was greatly beloved by his people. He was one of the first singled out by the vengeance of the mob. On the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, the Bishop was celebrating Mass, that is, the Holy Communion, in his cathedral. As he proceeded with the solemn service, loud and angry shouts fell on his ears. The ominous sounds grew more and more distinct, until at length the doors of the sacred building were forced open, and a band of armed ruffians burst in upon the astonished and terrified worshippers. Hoping to awe the intruders, the bishop proceeded slowly with the service. But the sanctity of God's holy altar was all as nothing to those who had never approached it for health and strength; and brandishing their axes, the murderers rushed upon the Bishop, and with brutal violence dragged him from the church. "This fellow," they cried, "was always with the King, and was his confessor; he never lived at his diocese with us, nor kept any hospitality, therefore shall he be slain." The good man prepared to meet his fate with calmness and resignation. Attired in his sacred vestments, and with hands clasped, he knelt in fervent prayer. His venerable appearance might well have awed the lawless ruffians who pressed around him; but they had been taught to hate and despise God's ministers, and felt no pity for their helpless victim. The deed of blood was speedily accomplished; the blows of the murderers fell thick and fast, and the Bishop's spirit soon passed to its eternal rest. Molens, Bishop of Chichester, was murdered in the same barbarous manner; and it was probably in order to allay popular excitement that the Lancastrian party elected Bishop Pecock, the friend of Duke Humphrey, to fill the vacant Bishopric of Chichester. It was not long, however, before he incurred the displeasure of the rulers of the Church, although, as we have seen, he had so ably defended her doctrines. Bishop Pecock's opinions were certainly much misrepresented, and a wrong construction put upon many of his acts. His view with regard to *the study of Holy Writ* did not at all accord with the feeling

of the age, and therefore, though a just and moderate view, it is regarded with suspicion. His idea was this; he believed that in reading Holy Scripture a man ought to use his reasoning powers, that is, try his utmost to understand God's words as well as simply believe what He has written. He considered, and rightly too, that God bestows reason as well as faith on his children, and that He permits us "to prove all things," and, like the Bereans of old, would encourage us to search the Scriptures, "whether such things are so." But let us not forget that such a work will either be pleasing or displeasing to God, according to the spirit in which we enter upon it. If, like Bishop Pecock, we go to the study of God's Word with a humble heart, earnestly desiring to understand in order that, like the Bereans, our faith may be confirmed, a blessing will, without doubt, be granted to our efforts. But, on the other hand, if, like too many in these days, we read the Word of God only to find out apparent contradictions, and to sit in judgment upon it, what light can we expect to find? For we shall have discarded the "lantern" which God has given us to be a "light unto our path," and have substituted in its place a false light, a religion of our own devising. The bishops failed to perceive the honesty of Pecock's heart, and dreaded lest, if his plan were adopted, men would soon reason themselves out of all belief in Scripture. It was a foolish feeling, but we must remember that jealousy for the honour of God's Word was the chief motive which influenced them. In those days, a simple faith in God, and in the doctrines of the Church, was all that was deemed necessary, and anything more than this was regarded as dangerous. We are ready enough to censure our ancestors for their folly in this respect, while it is to be feared that many of us have fallen into the opposite extreme. We refuse to believe anything in God's Holy Word which is contrary to our experience or beyond the grasp of our intellect; while a firm and steadfast faith in the doctrines of the Church is regarded as bigotry and superstition. Surely this last error is worse in God's sight than the first, for it is the self-sufficient error of one who "grope in the noonday as in the night," and who imagines he can fight the fight of faith without "the sword of the Spirit," which St. Paul tells us is "the Word of God."*

* Ephes. vi. 17.

CHAPTER XLIV.

EDWARD IV.—1460 to 1463.

PECOCK'S REVERENCE FOR HOLY SCRIPTURE—HE SHOWS A WANT OF FIRMNESS AND RESOLUTION—RECANTS RATHER THAN SUFFER THE PENALTIES OF THE LAW—HE IS DEPRIVED OF HIS BISHOPRIC, AND IMPRISONED IN THORNEY ABBEY—HIS DEATH—EDWARD, EARL OF MARCH, IS PROCLAIMED KING BY THE TITLE OF EDWARD IV.—HIS CRUELTY—HE MURDERS THE PRINCE OF WALES—ASSASSINATION OF HENRY VI.—HIS CHARACTER CONSIDERED—INSTANCES OF HIS PURITY, LOVE OF MERCY, AND PATIENT ENDURANCE OF INSULTS—HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE—DEPLORABLE STATE OF THE COUNTRY DURING HENRY'S REIGN—THE MONASTERIES AGAIN BECOME PLACES OF REFUGE FOR THE OPPRESSED AND DESOLATE—DISCOVERY OF THE ART OF PRINTING—ARCHBISHOP BOURCHIER DETERMINES TO INTRODUCE IT INTO ENGLAND—SUCCESS OF HIS SCHEME—REFLECTIONS.

I HAVE tried to show you that Bishop Pecock, though suspected of holding heretical views with regard to Holy Scripture, really felt a deep and sincere reverence for it. His own words prove this. "Holy Writ," he says, "is such a sure ground and foundation for our faith, that there is no better, greater, or surer foundation for our faith than the Word of God." He could see no danger in the proper study of it. One would have thought that the following words would have satisfied the bishops of those days. "I cannot imagine," says Pecock, "that it can be unlawful for laymen to read the Bible and study and learn therein, if they have the help and counsel of learned clerks,* and with license of their governor the bishop. For the clergy," he adds, "by their superior learning, have power and skill to declare to simple folks which is the true sense and understanding of Scripture."

Not every man who is convinced of the truth of what he believes has the courage to cling to that belief when persecution stares him in the face and all men are against him. Reginald Pecock, though a clever and a good man, was unable to endure the searching test now brought to bear on his teaching. Summoned before the Primate Bouchier, he was required publicly to recant his opinions and confess his error. But it was not without a severe struggle that Pecock consented thus to desert the cause he had so ably upheld. "I am in a great strait," he exclaimed, "on all sides, and for a little space, under a distrust which of the two offers it is best for me to accept. If I should defend my opinions, I am sure to suffer death and be burnt. If I do not defend them, I shall surely be made a gazing-stock by the reproaches of men. But it is better for me

* Clergy.

to suffer the reproaches of the people than to desert the law of faith. I make it my choice therefore to abjure, and intend for the future so to live as to give others no cause to suspect my honesty of purpose." These words would almost lead us to suppose that Pecock had changed his mind on several points, and really wished to recal some of his statements. Whether Pecock was terrified by the danger in which he stood, I know not, but his recantation was thorough, and his humiliation complete. It was witnessed by a large and eager multitude, who assembled to hear the Bishop condemn, with his own mouth, the opinions he had a short time before so boldly defended. It must have been a stirring yet mournful scene. Pecock stood up arrayed in his episcopal vestments, and while his books were being cast into the flames, he uttered with a loud voice his recantation. "Thus ingloriously," says the Bishop's biographer, "did this great man fall; being overcome by his own fears, and not having courage and resolution enough to hazard the poor remainder of a life almost worn out already, and come to an end. Let us," he concludes, "learn from his mournful history this useful lesson, that when we think we stand, to take heed lest we fall, remembering that however willing the spirit of a man may be, the flesh is weak." I think we must all feel the force of his concluding remark: "The story of Bishop Pecock shows us the consequence of the use of force and violence in matters of religion; that though it is impossible to write the truth on men's minds with the points of swords, or to enlighten their understandings by making bonfires of their bodies, they may be so far terrified by the apprehension of the cruelties with which they are threatened, as, for the sake of avoiding them, to profess outwardly what they do not inwardly really think or mean."*

Reginald Pecock gained but little by his recantation, for he was shortly afterwards most unjustly deprived of his bishopric. To make matters worse, he appealed to the Pope for redress. This unwise act roused the jealousy of the nation. Pecock was accused of having broken the law of provisors passed in Edward III.'s reign, which, you remember, forbade the Pope to interfere with the English clergy, and he was condemned to perpetual imprisonment in Thorney Abbey. His dreary captivity was but of short duration. Wearied with the bitter conflict through which he had passed, the venerable Bishop gradually grew weaker and weaker, and soon passed to that home of peace where the weary rest for evermore.

At this stormy period, when our country was desolated by

* Lewis's Life of Pecock.

war and bloodshed, few events occur in the history of our Church worth recording. In 1460, Edward, Earl of March, the son of Richard, Duke of York, who was slain in one of the fierce encounters between the Yorkists and Lancastrians, was proclaimed King. But Margaret of Anjou still struggled with all the energy of despair for her unfortunate husband and son, until the fatal battle of Tewkesbury for ever put an end to all her hopes. One would desire to shield even the character of a bad man from undue contempt and abhorrence; but Edward IV. literally bathed the foot of his throne in the blood of the innocent and upright. We know that God has said, "Woe to him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong;"* and therefore, as Christians, we may not excuse conduct which the God of all justice so much hates. You have read in your history how this cruel man regarded with callous indifference the ruthless murder of Henry's only child; and, not content with this shameless act of cowardice, acquiesced in the secret assassination of his saintlike father. It was darkly rumoured at the time that Richard, Duke of Gloucester (who, you remember, afterwards usurped the Crown), with his own hand committed the dastardly deed, exclaiming, "Now be there no heirs male of King Edward III., but we of the House of York!"† As I cannot vouch for the truth of this story, we shall do well to give this bad man the benefit of the doubt, and charitably hope that a deed of such atrocity was not added to his other crimes. It was a mournful day for the citizens of London when the dead body of their murdered King was borne through the streets. The corpse had been carefully hidden by the grave-clothes which were wound about it, that all might imagine the dead man had passed peaceably to his rest; but ominous drops of blood oozed through the apertures of the coffin, and told a dark and dreadful tale. Henry died a violent death, but he had lived on earth a life of purity and simple faith; and when his hour came he was ready to meet the Saviour he had so faithfully served and loved. An old writer thus sums up the character of this pious King: "Henry enjoyed during his reign great prosperity on the one hand, and great trouble on the other; yet in both states he was patient and virtuous; for he entertained all afflictions as sent by the Almighty, and absolutely resigned his will to the will of heaven. He was plain, upright, far from fraud, wholly given to prayer, reading of Scripture, and alms-deeds; of such integrity of life, that the Bishop, who had been his confessor for ten years, avouched that he had not, all that time, committed any mortal crime; for of his own natural will

* *Jer. xxii. 13.*

† *Sir Thomas More's Life of Edward V.*

he abhorred all the vices, as well of the body as the soul." But nothing will give us a juster view of Henry's character, than the anecdotes I have collected from one of our old historians. Our Lord has said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Henry hated everything which was capable of rousing an impure or unholy thought; and when some young women appeared at his Court in a costume which was barely decent, he turned away his face, exclaiming with honest indignation; "Fie, fie! forsooth ye are much to blame; come not into my presence until ye be clothed like honest women." Again Scripture saith, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." So pitiful, we are told, was Henry, that on one occasion when he came to St. Albans, and saw the body of one of his enemies hanging on a gibbet, he ordered it at once to be taken down, and decently interred, exclaiming, "I will not have any Christian so cruelly handled for my sake;" while on several other occasions he freely offered those who had rebelled against him his free and full forgiveness. Following the example of his Saviour, Henry learnt to endure injuries patiently. On another occasion, a cowardly villain smote him violently on the face. "Forsooth, forsooth," was the gentle rejoinder, "ye do foully to smite an anointed King so;" and when afterwards in the Tower, a ruffian had smote him with a sword, Henry's first act, when restored to his kingdom, was to pardon the miscreant. Though, for the sake of peace, Henry would willingly have resigned his crown, he believed he had a just right to hold it. It will interest you to read the words he used when, in his captivity, he was reproached for having unjustly held the sceptre of England. "My father," remonstrated the unfortunate Prince, "was King of England, and quietly enjoyed the Crown all his reign; and his father, my grandsire, was also King of England; and I, as a child in my cradle, was proclaimed and crowned King without any interruption, and so held it well nigh forty years, all the states doing homage unto me as to my ancestors. May I not then exclaim, with King David, 'The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground, yea, I have a goodly heritage; my help is from the Lord, who saveth the upright in heart?'"

To conclude with this King's personal appearance. We are told that he was "of seemly stature, of body slender, and his face was beautiful."* But though Henry himself was a man of singular piety and gentleness, his reign was a most disastrous one for the country. You can well imagine that, while each man fought for his own safety, and regarded no one's interest but his own, both Church and State suffered. Religion and learning

* Stow's Annals.

steadily declined, while the corruptions which had already crept into the Church daily increased. A writer of the time grievously complains "that the right discharge of the functions of a parish priest was almost grown into disuse," chiefly because comparatively few of the clergy lived at their parishes, while numbers of unworthy persons were promoted to the benefices. The same writer also tells us that "degrees could be purchased at Oxford, without any regard to life or learning; so that this connivance and bribery in the University overspread the country with ignorance, and made the parishes ill supplied." In those days, when books were most rare and costly, and the Bible in the hands of the few, it was the more necessary that the clergy should do the work of teaching and preaching honestly; for when they failed in their duty the people as a body became prejudiced, ignorant, and unholy. Yet although at this time most of the monks had become indolent and self-indulgent, we can see the wisdom of God in permitting the ancient monasteries to remain all through the civil wars of Henry VI.'s reign. During this period of anarchy and bloodshed, many innocent women and children took refuge within the walls of the friendly monastery, and obtained food and comfort and shelter in their hour of necessity.

Although religion and learning had sadly decayed, the prelates of the Church for the most part encouraged learning, and were many of them men of simple, earnest piety. Every one has read with interest of the marvellous invention which at this period was made known to the world. I mean the art of printing. Yet comparatively few are aware that it was mainly owing to the exertions of Archbishop Bouchier that this noble art was established in England. While Henry VI. still reigned, the Archbishop heard that a certain John Guthenberg had set up a wonderful kind of machine at Haarlem, by which words and letters could be stamped, or printed in an incredibly short space of time. The Primate appears to have been fully alive to the inestimable value of such a discovery; and he was determined his countrymen should reap the full benefit of it. You will, I think, be interested in hearing the crafty scheme he adopted to effect his purpose. Having without difficulty induced Henry to countenance his undertaking, he privately despatched a certain Robert Tournour to Haarlem. Tournour set out for Holland, well supplied with money. He had in his pocket a thousand marks, three hundred of which the Archbishop had generously supplied from his own purse. Tournour was accompanied by *Caxton, a London merchant*; and the two, carefully concealing *their real designs*, remained somewhere at Haarlem, watching the

printing-press, and gaining all the information they could. It appears that the chief difficulty was how to obtain a set of letters, without which it was useless to think of returning to England. At length, however, Caxton contrived, by means of a large bribe, to induce one of the printers, Frederic Corselli, to carry off a set of letters; and one dark night the three adventurers quitted Haarlem, and landed on the shores of England with their precious freight. Great was the delight of Archbishop Bourchier when he found his crafty scheme had succeeded. A printing-press was speedily set up at Oxford, which for a long time was protected by a guard of soldiers, lest the printers should slip away. Nor were the monasteries behindhand in following Bourchier's example. Westminster, St. Albans, Worcester, and several others were soon able to boast of printing-presses; while the astonished and admiring monks watched the marvellous process, which was to supersede for ever the laborious work of the scriptorium. Yet most ungenerous would it be of us, on whom God has bestowed the full benefit of this useful invention, to underrate the pious efforts of our forefathers. Unless the monks had been appointed by God to preserve His Holy Word, what real benefit would the art of printing have been to the Church? An old writer dwells with enthusiasm on the benefits which the world has derived from this discovery. "Hereby," he exclaims, "tongues are known, knowledge groweth, judgment increaseth, books are dispersed, Scripture is seen, the doctors be read, stories be opened, times compared, truths discovered, falsehood detected; and all through the benefit of printing."*

Although we may cordially agree with a good deal of this, we must bear in mind that, when these words were written, the benefits derived from printing were fully felt, while the evil which accompanied it was as yet undiscovered. One thing is worthy of note. The first books which ever issued from our English printing-presses were religious and useful ones. Would that succeeding ages had, in the same way, used without abusing this invaluable discovery. But, unhappily, in these days we have to deplore the circulation of many infidel and mischievous books, of which our less enlightened forefathers were happily ignorant. Let us all try to cultivate in our reading a taste for what is true and noble; so that we may each of us, in our small way, discourage the sale of hurtful and useless publications, and take pleasure in studying only those of a useful and improving character.

* Foxe.

CHAPTER XLV.

EDWARD IV. *continued*.—1463 to 1483.

CHARACTER OF EDWARD IV. AS GIVEN US BY STOW—HIS PLEASING APPEARANCE AND POPULARITY—HIS DISSOLUTE MODE OF LIFE AND WANT OF RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE—HIS MARRIAGE WITH ELIZABETH WOODVILLE—HIS FAITHLESS CONDUCT—REVERENCE SHOWN BY OUR FOREFATHERS FOR HOLY THINGS—PRIVILEGE OF SANCTUARY—CHURCHES PLACES OF REFUGE FOR THE OPPRESSED—FALSE AND CRUEL CONDUCT OF EDWARD AFTER THE BATTLE OF TEWKESBURY—STORY OF GEORGE NEVILLE, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK—EDWARD'S TREACHEROUS CONDUCT—SAD FATE OF THE ARCHBISHOP—APPREHENSIONS OF EDWARD WITH REGARD TO HENRY, EARL OF RICHMOND—HE DISSEMBLES, HOPING TO GET THE EARL INTO HIS POWER—FAILURE OF THE SCHEME—AVARICIOUSNESS OF HENRY—EDWARD GRANTS IMPORTANT PRIVILEGES TO THE CLERGY—HIS DEATH-BED SCENE DESCRIBED—HE EXPRESSES HIS PENITENCE BEFORE HE DIES.

As few events of importance, worthy of note, occur in the Church history of this period, I will tell you about some of the characters of this time, for in them there is a good deal to interest and instruct. Notwithstanding the cruel and unscrupulous policy of Edward IV., perhaps no king was ever more admired by his subjects. His history affords a remarkable instance of the wonderful influence which a pleasing, gracious manner will exercise over others. Edward possessed that gift, which is so invaluable to a sovereign, of being able to attach the people to his cause; while his free and courteous behaviour roused their loyalty, and made them blind to his defects. "By his condescending manners," remarks the famous Sir Thomas More, "Edward gained the hearty favour of the common people, who oftentimes more esteem and take for great kindness, a little courtesy, than a great profit or benefit."* An old writer thus describes Edward's character and appearance: "He was a king of such governance and behaviour, in time of peace, that there was never any prince of the land, obtaining the crown by battle, so heartily beloved by the substance of the people. He was of goodly personage, princely to behold, of heart courageous, politic in council, in adversity nothing abashed, in prosperity rather joyful than proud, in peace just and merciful, in war sharp and fierce, in the field bold and hardy. He was of image lovely, of body mighty, strong and clean made, howbeit in his latter days, with over-liberal diet somewhat corpulent and boozely."† Yet, with all these brilliant qualities, one thing was lacking of far more value than them all. Gay, thoughtless, and dissolute, Edward was a man utterly devoid of religious principle; and though he won the admiration of his people, he could never *obtain their respect*. As long as religion with its sacred duties

* *Sir Thomas More's Life of Edward V.*† *Stow's Annals.*

and observances interfered not with his pleasures, he was willing to show an outward reverence for them. Yet while Edward knelt in God's house, and confessed Him with his lips, in thought and deed he denied his Maker. It is an awful thought that to the man who leads a sensual and unholy life, God's blessed means of grace will prove only means of condemnation. St. Paul, in burning words, expresses this fact: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"* It is not for frail man to sit in judgment on any fellow-creature; but the Word of God tells us that sins of impurity, more than any others, do despite unto the Spirit of grace, and grieve Him to depart; and it was in this respect that Edward IV. so grievously erred. He had incurred the wrath of the great Earl of Warwick by marrying Elizabeth, widow of Sir John Grey, and daughter of Richard, Lord Woodville. Having seen this lady, and become at once fascinated by her beauty, principle and the public interest were made to give place to his fancy. He discarded the Duke of Savoy's sister, whom he had promised to marry, and promoted Elizabeth Woodville to be his queen. Whether or no this unfortunate lady aimed at so great an honour, I cannot say; but, if it were so, she suffered enough for her folly. Her history is a tissue of disappointed hopes, of trials and vexations. Edward swore, at God's altar, to love and cherish his wife; but he faithlessly broke his vows, and Elizabeth soon had the mortification of knowing that she only shared with other women the affection of her false husband.

I have shown you that in olden times our ancestors for the most part displayed great outward reverence for holy places and things, and, attracted by the gorgeous character of the Church's services, thronged "the courts of the Lord" with willing hearts. We have no right to regard such a feeling as a mere idle superstition, for God, in His wisdom, implanted it at this time in men's hearts. In those days the most brutal passions were too often indulged in, and great ignorance prevailed among the lower classes; a religion, then, which would appeal to the senses, and awe men by its dignified and grand ceremonial was needed. Better far that the authority of the Church should be somewhat unduly exalted, and her sacraments receive more than *suitable honour*, than that lawlessness and open profanity should *reign triumphant*. It was this outward feeling of reverence for

* Heb. x. 28, 29.

sacred places and things which made our forefathers view with peculiar horror the violation of God's sanctuary. Whoever took refuge within the church felt himself secure. Like those cities of refuge which Moses in old time had set apart, the churches became sanctuaries of refuge for the injured and innocent, where they could remain in peace and security. Like all good customs, this privilege of sanctuary, as it was called, sometimes became abused; but although the guilty and the murderer, on some occasions, may have been kept back from receiving the reward of their crimes, hundreds of innocent men and women were often protected in these sacred retreats from the cruelty of their persecutors. It was surely a good thing when a man like Edward, who cared little for religion, could be suddenly awed and held back from sin by such a feeling. After the fatal battle of Tewkesbury, which for ever put an end to the hopes of the Lancastrians, certain fugitive noblemen took refuge in a church hard by, imagining that no man, however profane, would dare to violate the sanctity of God's altar. But he who should have set an example to the rest of the nation was the first to break through the custom, which had been for so many ages regarded as sacred. Burning with fury, Edward pursued his victims to the very door of the church, and, with drawn sword, demanded instant admittance. But the good priest who had willingly sheltered the terrified fugitives boldly stood before the door, and holding aloft the sacred Eucharist, in solemn words forbade the enraged warrior to enter. "Stand back, merciless man!" he exclaimed; "how dare ye violate with drawn sword a spot sacred to the all-merciful God?" Edward was at once awed. Dropping his sword, he slowly turned to depart. But the priest was not satisfied. "Swear, warrior Duke," said he, "that to these helpless men, who now claim the protection of God's altar, thou wilt grant a full and free forgiveness." "I swear," said Edward, and he turned sullenly away. Not many days afterwards the citizens of Tewkesbury assembled in the market-place to witness the execution of four Lancastrian nobles. They were the fugitives who had claimed in vain the sacred privilege of sanctuary. Such a deed as this speaks for itself. What excuse can be offered for it? Edward's biographer, who certainly tries to make the most of the King's good points, concludes the account of this disgraceful affair with the following remark: "By such violation of the sanctuary, Edward made good the opinion, which the world had before conceived of him, that religion never could prevail so far upon his conscience, as to be any bar to his pleasures or revenge."*

* *Habington's Life of Edward IV.*

The King's want of faith was also manifested on another occasion. George Neville, Archbishop of York, was a man who took a prominent part in the events of Henry's stormy reign. He was brother to the famous Earl of Warwick, and a brave, open-hearted, and unsuspecting character. As long as the Earl, his brother, supported Edward, the Archbishop agreed in supporting him too; but when Warwick took offence at Edward's marriage with Elizabeth Woodville, and went over to the Lancastrian party, his brother followed him. At one time, during the civil war, when Edward fell into the hands of his enemies, he was committed by the Earl Warwick to the custody of his brother the Archbishop. This prelate appears to have treated the captive king with great consideration, allowing him every comfort and a considerable amount of liberty. Edward was allowed to roam at pleasure over the princely park at Middleham Castle, chasing the deer, or quietly wandering through the stately avenues. But his mind was haunted by gloomy and revengeful thoughts: and while he cleverly planned and executed his escape, he vowed vengeance against the unsuspecting prelate. Edward, however, so well dissembled his real feelings, that a year afterwards we find him hunting in company with Archbishop Neville in Windsor Park. Flattered by the King's affability and condescension in permitting him to be his guest, Neville ventured to propose that Edward should honour him with a visit at his manor of Moor Park, in Hertfordshire. "Your Majesty," said Neville, "need fear no lack of deer on my estate." Edward readily accepted the invitation, for it opened to him an easy method by which to effect his purpose. One can feel some respect for a sovereign who, when he distrusts a subject, openly shows his aversion, and brings the man to a fair trial; but he who conceals his feelings of hatred under the garb of friendship is worthy of all contempt. The unlucky Archbishop, we read, "with much complacency retired to his house, joyful to see the King so free in his affection, without memory of former discontents."* Were I to give you a description of the sumptuous entertainment prepared by the Archbishop for his royal guest, you would be lost in wonder at the variety and abundance of the delicacies. It gives us a vivid idea of the wealth and grandeur by which the ecclesiastics of those times were surrounded. Archbishop Neville certainly threw his whole heart into the preparations; for, "besides using his own plate," we are told, "he borrowed much of his friends, and *purveyed* for the King two or three days, meat, drink, and lodging, as royally as he could."

* Habington's Life of Edward IV.

But just as everything was prepared, and Neville was on the tiptoe of expectation, the most signal disappointment awaited him. Hour after hour passed, and the royal guest came not. As the Archbishop paced hurriedly up and down the stately hall, pondering with uneasiness on the unaccountable delay, a messenger arrived from Windsor, commanding him at once to appear before the King. Neville was reluctantly forced to obey. He foresaw that a storm was gathering, and bitterly repented his too easy credulity. Neville was ushered into the King's presence, who, frowning angrily at the man for whom he had lately expressed such sincere regard, accused him of high treason. The astonished prelate, forbidden to speak in his own defence, was hurried off to prison. His costly furniture, and the magnificent plate he had so generously provided for the King's entertainment, were seized; while the faithless Edward, not content with appropriating the Archbishop's money, to the value of one thousand pounds, even seized his mitre, and breaking it in pieces, placed the costly jewels in his own crown. For four years Neville dragged out a weary captivity in England, when he was removed to Calais, and placed under rigorous confinement. After many years his friends contrived to procure his release; but the unfortunate prelate, his health and spirits broken down by the hardships he had undergone, only lived for a short time to enjoy his newly-recovered liberty.

I would not, however, withhold from Edward his due. It is only just to state that in a worldly point of view he was a good king, and was admirably suited to be the sovereign of a great nation, for during his reign England enjoyed peace and prosperity. Yet, for all this, Edward was not altogether easy in his mind. He imagined that the hopes of the Lancastrian party were entirely crushed; but one man lived to be a thorn in his side. It was Henry of Richmond, who, you remember, afterwards reigned as Henry VII. His mother, Margaret, Countess of Richmond, was the only child and heiress of the Duke of Somerset, natural son of the famous John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. Now, although his title to the crown was rather a doubtful one, it was just enough to make Edward feel uncomfortable. He therefore determined if possible to get the Duke into his power. Richmond had wisely avoided mixing himself up with English affairs, and was enjoying perfect retirement at the court of the Duke of Brittany. Ambassadors arrived from the English king, proposing that Henry should marry King Edward's daughter, the Princess Elizabeth. It was craftily suggested that it would be well if Henry came over in person to *arrange matters*. "Our master," said the ambassadors, presenting

a large sum of money to Henry, "offers your grace this gift, if ye will consent to return with us. Our master only desires your presence, that matters may be amicably arranged, and that all remnants of discord may be plucked up between the contending factions." These words sounded reasonable enough, and moreover the gold glittered very temptingly. It is amusing to find how Henry's avaricious nature peeps out on this occasion. He took the precaution to pocket the money, but requested time for deliberation. Meanwhile the Duke of Brittany was secretly informed "that the Earl was not so earnestly sought for to be coupled in marriage with King Edward's daughter, as to have his head parted from his body with an axe." Whether the information was correct or not I have no means of judging; but it was sufficiently alarming to the Duke, who instantly conveyed his guest to a place of safety. So the crestfallen ambassadors were forced to return to their master without either the Earl or the money.

It is remarkable that Edward, although a man of no religious feeling, managed to pacify the clergy by passing a law which entirely exempted them from judgment in the secular courts. The old principle for which Becket had contended, and which had often been violated, was now confirmed by a sovereign who "cared for none of these things!" It was enacted that whatever sin a priest might commit, he could only receive sentence in an ecclesiastical court, and that the King's ministers of justice could have no power over him.

While Edward was immersed in sin and pleasure, death came upon him. The fleeting joys, for which he had staked everything—health, honour, and life itself—faded from his grasp. Alone, in the presence of his Maker, he knew he must soon stand, "to answer for the deeds done in the body." It must have been an awful thought for the man who had lived only for this world. His biographer thus depicts, in graphic language, the last scene: "In the midst of his prosperity, death arrested him, and instructed him more than all the oratory from pulpits had done for forty years. When he found himself mortally sick, he began to consider the vanity of all his victories; he looked back on the beauty of all his sensual pleasures, which were so fair on the outside, but all was inward rottenness and depravity. He cast up his accounts, and found himself a bankrupt. Till now, he had wanted leisure to search into that which most concerned him. He had delighted too much in the pomp and pleasure of the inn where he was not to stay, forgot *he had a journey*, and so unawares was overtaken by night—an *endless night*, which no day succeeds."* At that awful hour

* Habington's Life of Edward IV.

Edward fully realised all the danger of his position. With passionate words, he protested his repentance, and asked God's pardon for all the innocent blood he had shed. With despairing hope he clung to the holy Eucharist; and as the priest knelt down, and in solemn words held out to the dying sinner the bread of life, Edward eagerly received it, vainly hoping that this last act of faith would blot out, in God's sight, all his former sins of unfaithfulness. Over the sinner's destiny God would in mercy draw a veil; and it is not for mortal man to try and raise it up; but one useful lesson we may lay to heart in dwelling on Edward's death-bed scene. 'The man who throughout his life yields to his evil passions, and defers his repentance to the last, trusting to find peace on his death-bed, will be cherishing a hope which, in another world, will be found to be worthless. May it be our aim to take heed while the day of salvation lasteth, "working out our own salvation with fear and trembling," that, when the night cometh when no man can work, we may be prepared to meet our God.

CHAPTER XLVI.

EDWARD V.—1483.

EDWARD IV. BEFORE HIS DEATH ARRANGES EVERYTHING FOR THE WELL-BEING OF HIS SON—SAD FAILURE OF ALL HIS SCHEMES—CHARACTER OF RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER—HIS CRUELTY AND HYPOCRISY—HE AIMS AT THE CROWN—THE NOBLES AND CLERGY ARE ENTIRELY IGNORANT OF HIS INTENTIONS—RICHARD'S DEEP DISSIMULATION—HE GETS THE YOUNG KING INTO HIS POWER—EDWARD'S SPIRITED DEFENCE OF HIS UNCLE, EARL RIVERS—BETRAYAL OF THIS NOBLEMAN—APPREHENSION OF THE QUEEN-MOTHER—SHE TAKES REFUGE WITH HER SON, THE DUKE OF YORK, IN THE SANCTUARY AT WESTMINSTER—RICHARD DETERMINES TO SECURE THE DUKE OF YORK—HIS FALSE BUT SPECIOUS ARGUMENTS—HE PERSUADES THE PRELATES AND NOBLES OF HIS INTEGRITY—ARCHBISHOP BOURCHIER REFUSES TO VIOLATE THE PRIVILEGE OF SANCTUARY, BUT CONSENTS TO TRY AND PERSUADE ELIZABETH TO PART WITH HER SON.

On his death-bed, Edward had entrusted his little son, the Prince of Wales, to the guardianship of his uncle, Lord Rivers, brother to the queen. He fondly imagined that all had been arranged for the well-being of the young king. All the nobles had protested their loyalty to the heir. Even the King's false brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, artfully concealing his real intentions, had smiled complacently on the young prince. *How true is the old proverb: "Man proposes, but God disposes."* *Little did Edward foresee the dire misfortunes which were so*

soon to fall on his innocent children. The story of the betrayal and murder of these young princes is full of deep and mournful interest; and as some of the ecclesiastics of the time are connected with their history, I shall give you an account of it. The simple facts of the sad story are familiar to the youngest child; but my object will be to dwell chiefly on certain incidents which are not so generally known; and these, I am sure, cannot fail to interest you.

The character of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, has by some writers been defended and even extolled; but I think with little success. Whatever may have been his good qualities (and the worst man has some), his cruelty, his ambition, and consummate hypocrisy are undeniable. I believe the character which Stow gives us of this bad man is on the whole just and unbiassed. "Richard," he says, "was quite equal to his brother Edward in wit and courage, but in body and prowess far under him. Little of stature, ill-favoured of limbs, crook-backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right, hard-favoured of visage; he was malicious, wrathful, envious, and from his birth ever froward, far more suited for war than for peace; he was close and secret, a deep dissembler, lowly of countenance, arrogant of heart, outwardly affectionate where he inwardly hated, not letting to kiss whom he thought to kill, dispiteous and cruel, not always for evil will, but for ambition, and either for the surety or increase of his estate, friends and foe was much what indifferent; where his advantage grew, he spared no man's death, whose life withstood his purpose."*

In the hands of this cruel and unscrupulous prince, the young king and his brother were soon unfortunate enough to fall. At first sight, one is astonished at the easy way in which nearly all the great men of the time fell victims to Richard's duplicity. We can hardly imagine that a man of Archbishop Bouchier's discernment could have been led into the snare; but we have only to imagine that for years Richard had dissembled his real feelings, acting for the most part with candour and consistency, and the difficulty is solved. The following anecdote will, however, show us that the Duke's designs were suspected by some among a lower class. We read that on the same night on which King Edward breathed his last, an honest citizen, eager to spread the news of his death, went to the house of one Pottier, in Cripplegate, and apprised him of the fact. "By my truth, man," was the instant rejoinder of Pottier, "then will my *master* the Duke of Gloucester be king, I warrant ye;" a *prophecy* which was too surely fulfilled.† Richard planned and

* *Stow's Annals.*

† *Sir Thomas More's Life of Edward V.*

executed his diabolical scheme with consummate craftiness. Stow exclaims with honest indignation: "Richard, Duke of Gloucester, by nature uncle to these young princes, by office their protector, to their father beholden, to themselves by oath and allegiance bounded, broke those bands which join man and man together, and without any respect of God or the world, unnaturally contrived to bereave them not only of their dignity but also of their lives."

The young King Edward, at the time of his father's death, was holding his court at Ludlow, on the borders of Wales, attended by his tutor, the Earl Rivers, and a large body of faithful adherents. Richard knew it was useless for him to attempt anything while the young prince was so well guarded; but he spread a trap for the unsuspecting nobles, into which they soon fell. Feigning sincere regard for his nephew, he urged that it would be well for his coronation to take place at once; but he added, "Let not the young king, my dear nephew, travel to London with a large escort, for so formidable an appearance might alarm the country, and create a jealousy of maladministration; of a truth people would say, 'These lords take too much upon them, for they would even now engross the government.'" These plausible arguments had due effect; and even the Queen-mother, who appears to have had a peculiar aversion to the Duke, fell into the snare. But Richard's real designs were soon manifested, although his plausible manner and specious arguments blinded, for a time, the eyes of the nobles.

Little is known of the character of the ill-fated young king; but the meagre notices we have of him prove that he was possessed of an affectionate and generous nature. Though gentle and uncomplaining when injured himself, his boyish fearlessness and generous anger burst forth when those he loved were assailed. A devoted attachment had sprung up between the boy and his uncle, Earl Rivers. But Richard had planned as a necessary part of his scheme the overthrow of this just and loyal nobleman. He knew that the surest way to accomplish this was to undermine the character of his victim. At the same time he determined to compass the ruin of the Marquis Dorset and the Earl Grey, the King's half-brother. During Edward's progress towards London, the Duke of Buckingham demanded an interview with the King. "I come," said he, "in the name of my Lord Protector, to forewarn your highness against those who would overthrow your authority." "Prithee," said the young King, "who may these be?" "The Lord Rivers," rejoined the Duke, "the Marquis Dorset, and the Earl

Grey are trying to rule your Majesty and the realm, setting the kingdom at variance, that they may destroy all the noble and great in the land." The hot blood rushed to the young King's face, and with honest indignation he retorted to this hateful and unjust accusation. "Shame on ye, false Duke," said he; "what my lord Marquis and others have done I ken not, but in good faith I dare answer for my uncle Rivers, and my brother here, that they be innocent of such foul charges." Shortly afterwards, when these faithful friends were ruthlessly torn from him, the young prince clung round them, and sobbed with all the passionate bitterness of a child.*

Lord Rivers and Earl Grey were safely lodged, by order of Richard, in Pontefract Castle, while the King, now wholly in his power, was conveyed to London and placed in the Tower. From this dreary fortress the innocent young prince never again came forth. The violent proceedings of the Protector, as Richard craftily styled himself, soon reached the ears of the Queen, who, in an agony of terror, fled with her younger son, the Duke of York, to the sanctuary at Westminster, which sacred refuge had before sheltered her in her hour of need. Elizabeth appears from the first to have mistrusted the Duke of Gloucester; and bitterly did she now regret having given such easy credence to his honied words. Yet in her extremity she was not wholly without comforters. At a time when it must have been dangerous to show any sympathy with this unfortunate woman, Dr. Rotherham, Archbishop of York, determined to go to the sanctuary and offer her what comfort he could. It so happened the night before, that, as the prelate lay in bed, a messenger had arrived from Lord Hastings—whom Richard had contrived to make his dupe—assuring Rotherham that there was no cause for alarm, as the Protector had declared to him all would be well. The Archbishop, however, appears to have had no such hope. "Marry!" he replied, "be it as well as it will, it will never be as well as we have seen it." But though his heart sank within him, he determined to make the best of it to the Queen. He had, however, undertaken no easy task. On arriving at the sanctuary, he found Elizabeth alone. She had refused all comfort; and giving herself up to despair, had thrown herself on the rushes which covered the floor, and was sobbing in a convulsive manner. This unusual sight well nigh unmanned the Archbishop; but he proceeded to deliver his poor comfort in the best manner he could. "Prithee, prithee, madam," he gently *remonstrated*, "take not the ills which God sends thus impatiently; the matter is nothing so bad as ye take it; for only

* Sir Thomas More.

last even I was put in good hope and out of fear by the message sent me by the Lord Hastings." Whether the Archbishop's look and manner belied his words, or whether the Queen had set her face against all comfort, I know not, but his kindly remonstrances only served to rouse afresh her grief and indignation. Elizabeth possessed a full share of the weakness of her sex, with all the unreasoning self-will which, it must be owned, characterizes so many of them. A passionate exclamation was the only reply the Archbishop received. "A woe worth, the Lord Hastings! for it is he that goeth about to destroy me and my blood!" Dr. Rotherham, finding the subject he had brought forward so unpalatable, chose another argument, which, though well-intentioned, was hardly calculated to give the unfortunate mother much consolation. "Madam," quoth he, "be of good comfort, for I do assure ye, that if they crown any other King but your son whom they now have, we shall on the morrow crown his brother whom ye have here with you." Elizabeth refused to take heart at the notion that, when one child was murdered, she had another to take his place; and so the worthy prelate was forced to retire, his kindly errand having proved a signal failure.

With a heavy heart Dr. Rotherham returned to his palace, which overlooked the river at Westminster. Throwing open his window, he gazed at the calm stream which flowed beneath. But the sight that met his gaze filled him with apprehension. From one bank to the other, the river was covered with boats, filled with armed men. It was only too clear that they had been placed there by the Protector to guard the sanctuary, "that no person should go there, nor come out thence."* Richard was well aware that the dastardly scheme he projected could never be fully accomplished until the little Duke of York was also within his power. One is lost in amazement at the clever way in which this bad man concealed his real designs. Partly by cajolery, partly by open argument, he contrived to blind the eyes not only of the Primate Bouchier, but also of all the nobles who assembled to listen to his plausible speech. "What think ye, my lords," he said, "of the conduct of the Queen" (meaning Elizabeth), "who would thus distrust her faithful protectors? By thus cowardly taking refuge in sanctuary with the Duke, is she not casting a deep reflection on those lords who are entrusted with the care of the King? As if, forsooth, they be not fit to be trusted with his brother. Marry, what need hath he of the protection of sanctuary, when *all the nation be so loyally disposed*? And hath not the young

* Sir Thomas More.

King, who now spendeth the dreary hours alone, need of a playmate? I ask ye, one and all, who is so proper to divert the King and keep him company, as his own brother?" Then, turning round on the assembled nobles, he added, "What faithful friend have I who will visit the Queen and acquaint her with our mind in this matter?" Pointing towards the Primate Bouchier, who was wrapt in deep thought, Richard suddenly exclaimed, "Truly none seemeth more meet to undertake this matter than my Lord Cardinal,* Archbishop of Canterbury, who may in this venture do most good of all men, if it please him to take the pain, which I doubt not of his goodness he will not refuse, for the King's sake and ours, and wealth of the young Duke himself, and for comfort of my sovereign lord, my most dearest nephew; considering that thereby shall be ceased the slanderous rumours and obloquy now going abroad." The Primate looked earnestly upon the Duke as he spoke. His words, his manner all betokened, as he imagined, the honesty of his heart. The thought presented itself to his mind; who, indeed, was more proper to have the charge of the young princes than their own uncle, who had so solemnly sworn to guard and keep them from harm? We shall do well to bear in mind that, as yet, Richard had committed no gross crime which could tend to open the eyes of the people to his real intentions. Bouchier, trustful and unsuspecting, always charitably believed a man's intentions to be honest until he had given proof to the contrary. And so he yielded. But the Cardinal was not the man slavishly to acquiesce in anything which he considered contrary to God's will, or the law of the land; and when Richard, finding his specious arguments successful, went a step further, and urged that if the Queen proved obstinate, the young Duke should be taken from her by force, he boldly stood up, and with words of honest indignation, flatly refused to countenance such a violation of God's sanctuary. Rotherham, Archbishop of York, and the rest of the prelates, to their honour be it said, unanimously seconded Bouchier's words. "If," said he, "the Queen should seem willing to give up the child, I will do my utmost to persuade her; howbeit, if she can in no wise be entreated of her good-will to deliver him, I think, with the rest of the prelates, that it is in no wise to be attempted; for surely," he added, with increased fervour, "it would be a thing that should turn to the judgment of all men, and high displeasure of God, if the privilege of that place should be broken, which so many years *hath been kept holy*, which both Kings and Popes have granted *and confirmed*. Since the earliest times was there never so

* Bouchier had been created Cardinal by the Pope.

undevout a King that ever attempted to violate that sacred privilege; and therefore God forbid that any man should, for any earthly enterprise, break the immunity and liberty of that sacred sanctuary that hath been the safeguard of so many a good man's life. But I hope," he cheerfully added, "we shall not need it; I trust that the Queen with reason shall be contented, and all things in a good manner obtained." The Primate turned towards the craven Duke, who could not and dared not answer his upright argument. "Yet shall I further this enterprise," continued Bouchier, "with my best power, that you may all perceive my good-will, diligence, and endeavour; for, I warrant ye, the mother's dread and womanish fear shall be the let, if any." "Nay, womanish frowardness, rather," hastily interrupted the Duke of Buckingham, "for I dare take it on my soul, that she well knoweth that she need no such thing to fear, either for her son, or for herself." Then in a long speech, the argument of which was as crafty and specious as the Primate's had been honest, the Duke endeavoured to prove that, though men and women might on certain occasions claim the right of sanctuary, a child could claim no such protection; "for he hath," urged the Duke, "neither judgment to desire the privilege, nor fault to deserve it." One is surprised to find that the Duke's false reasoning convinced most of the lay members of the council; but, happily, the Bishops remained firm to the Primate. From what I have told you of the character of Elizabeth, and her deeply-rooted aversion to Richard, you can well understand that Archbishop Bouchier had undertaken no easy task.

The mournful and touching interview which now took place between the Queen and Primate in the sanctuary at Westminster is so well described by Holinshed and the great Sir Thomas More, that I cannot do better than take my account of it from them. The narrative is a long one, therefore I fear I can only give you extracts from it; but these I know will greatly interest you, and serve to recall with peculiar reality the sad scene.

CHAPTER XLVII.

EDWARD V. *continued*, and RICHARD III.—1483 to 1485.

CARDINAL BOURCHIER'S HONESTY—HE IS WHOLLY IGNORANT OF RICHARD'S DESIGNS—TOUCHING SCENE IN THE SANCTUARY AT WESTMINSTER—THE QUEEN, AT FIRST MISTRUSTING THE PROTECTOR, STEADILY REFUSES TO PART WITH HER SON—HER PASSIONATE CONDUCT AND VEHEMENT LANGUAGE—SHE AT LENGTH RELENTS—SAD PARTING BETWEEN THE QUEEN AND PRINCE—THE YOUNG DUKE IS CONVEYED TO HIS UNCLE—TREACHEROUS CONDUCT OF RICHARD—HE CONSIGNS HIS NEPHEW TO THE TOWER—EXECUTION OF LORD RIVERS, EARL GREY, AND LORD HASTINGS—RICHARD'S DESIGNS NO LONGER CONCEALED—DR. SHAW PREACHES AT ST. PAUL'S CROSS—HIS SHAMELESS AND FALSE HARANGUE—HE TRIES TO PROVE THAT RICHARD HAS A BETTER RIGHT TO THE CROWN THAN HIS NEPHEW—FAILURE OF SHAW'S SCHEME FOR IMPRESSING THE PEOPLE—DEATH OF SHAW—RICHARD PROCLAIMS HIMSELF KING—DESPAIR OF THE YOUNG KING EDWARD—RICHARD PLANS THE MURDER OF THE TWO PRINCES—SIR ROBERT BRACKENBURY, CONSTABLE OF THE TOWER, REFUSES TO TAKE PART IN THE ATROCIOUS DEED—RICHARD HIRES JAMES TYRRELL TO DO THE WORK OF MURDER—RICHARD'S SHORT REIGN—HIS WRETCHED STATE OF MIND—MORTON, BISHOP OF ELY, INVITES HENRY OF RICHMOND TO COME OVER AND CLAIM THE CROWN—BATTLE OF BOSWORTH—RICHARD IS SLAIN, AND HENRY IS PROCLAIMED KING OF ENGLAND.

THERE can be no doubt whatever that Cardinal Bouchier, as he made his way to the sanctuary, was wholly ignorant of Richard's foul designs. His intentions were clearly honest and upright. He had already manfully raised his voice when Richard had openly proposed acting in an unjust and illegal manner; therefore we may be sure that had he been at all aware of the Duke's duplicity, he would at once have indignantly refused to have anything to do with the matter. Bouchier had undertaken a difficult and thankless task, in the hope that he might be able to avert what he considered a great crime. "If," thought he to himself, "the Duke be determined to violate God's sanctuary, and tear the child thence, be it my part to woo him from his mother with eloquence; that so great an injury may not be offered to the prejudice of Holy Church."* In such a case as this, when we wish to prove either the guilt or innocence of historical characters, we shall be most likely to get at the real truth if we consult those who are undoubtedly opposed to them. Should the testimony be favourable, I think we may be pretty sure it is the true one, for it will have been wrested from them unwillingly. An infidel writer, who has done his utmost to blacken the memory of ecclesiastics of olden times, thus speaks of the conduct of the Primate Bouchier, and of Rotherham, Archbishop of York. "These prelates," he says, "were persons

* Fuller, vol. i., p. 525.

of known integrity and honour; and being themselves entirely persuaded of the Duke's good intentions, they employed every argument, accompanied by earnest entreaties, exhortations, and assurances, to bring the Queen over to the same opinion."*

As the honest Primate stepped on the threshold of the sanctuary,† he breathed an earnest prayer that all might be well. The Queen, with dishevelled hair, and eyes that bore trace of many a tear, entered the apartment, leading in her hand the young duke, a child of about ten years old. With fond looks, she smoothed his silken hair, which flowed in graceful waves down his shoulders. Saddened and awed by the sight of his mother's distress, the princely boy clung fondly about her. With a half-frightened, half-curious look, he surveyed the Primate, who not without some effort suppressed his emotion. Dark rumours of his uncle's perfidy had reached the ears of the young prince, while his mother's passionate exclamations had filled his childish mind with a sort of indefinite horror; its very indistinctness tending to make it more appalling. How true it is that the mind of a sensitive child will often feel far more acutely an imaginary evil than a real and substantial one. In this case, however, the unfortunate little Duke had only too much real cause for alarm. The Primate spoke first. With all the eloquence of which he was capable, he endeavoured to persuade the Queen that it would be for the good of the nation, and for the benefit of the young Duke also, if he were permitted to be with his brother, who sorely lacked a playmate. But the mother's fears had been roused; Elizabeth was in no mood to acknowledge the justice of the Primate's reasoning. "My lord," she replied, with some degree of haughtiness, "I say not nay but that it were very convenient that this child whom you require were in the company of the King, his brother; yet truly, me thinketh it were well for both that they were in custody of their mother." Then fondly caressing the noble boy, who pressed closer to her side, she added: "And I would have you know also that this, my younger son, needed just now good looking to, for he hath been sore diseased with sickness; and surely," she continued, with increased vehemence, "none is more tenderly like to cherish him than his own mother that bare him." "Good madam," calmly returned the Cardinal, "your grace, of all folk, is surely most necessary about your children; yet, if ye think it wise to tarry here, we believe that it would be

* Hume, vol. iii., p. 271.

† Sir Thomas More tells us that the Lord Howard accompanied Bouchier to Westminster, but makes no mention of Dr. Rotherham being present.

better and more honourable for the Duke of York to be at liberty with his brother." The only answer he received from the Queen was a passionate exclamation: "Nay, forsooth, I intend not to come forth from this refuge, and endanger myself after my friends. Would to God they were all rather here in safety with me, than I in danger with them." Up to this point, the Lord Howard had stood aloof, and with folded arms had listened intently to the conversation. He now with considerable want of tact hastily exclaimed: "Why, madam, know you anything why they should be in danger?" This unwise remark roused all Elizabeth's latent apprehension, and she indignantly exclaimed: "Nay, verily, nor why they should be in prison, as they now be. Yea, I do fear me greatly, lest those who have not letted* to put them in durance without colour, will let as little to procure their destruction without cause." The Archbishop, finding that the conversation was taking a very awkward turn, shook his head at the Lord Howard, and hastily put his finger to his mouth, that, as the narrator quaintly remarks, "he might harp no more on that string." But Elizabeth's womanly fears once roused, it was no easy matter to calm or reassure her. She refused any longer to listen to reason, and when she spoke, her words were full of bitter irony. "So my lord the Protector saith thus and thus, say ye; ay, marry, I pray God he be a protector rather than a destroyer. So he saith that it is not honourable that the Duke abide here; tenderly he saith, it were more comfortable for them both that he were with his brother, because the King lacketh a playfellow. I pray God send him better playfellows than he is like to have now; as though indeed none could be found to play with the King save his brother, which hath no lust† to play for sickness. Ay, marry, evil counsellors ye be, all of ye. Go tell my Lord Protector," she passionately exclaimed, "whosoever he be that breaketh this holy sanctuary, I pray God send him shortly need of sanctuary." With these words, all the Queen's pent-up feelings burst forth, and throwing herself on the ground, she covered her face with her hands, and sobbed convulsively. Archbishop Bouchier, bewildered and amazed at the piteous sight, was in sore perplexity how to act. Like many other men, he could withstand a woman's argument, but her tears altogether unmanned him, and after a moment's hesitation, he beckoned to his companion to withdraw. But when Bouchier least expected it, Elizabeth, with all a woman's waywardness, had softened and relented. She slowly raised her eyes, and fixed them with a long searching gaze on the Primate, as if she

* Hesitated.

† Desire.

would scan his inmost thoughts. The gentle look of pity and compassion that greeted her tended to reassure her drooping heart; and when Bouchier gently chided her for her want of confidence she fairly yielded. Possibly at that moment the thought crossed her mind that it would be far better to give her child into the care of the kindly and upright man who stood before her, than that he should be forcibly snatched from her arms by the hated Duke himself. This idea will, I think, partly account for Elizabeth's change of mind. "Ye have your will," she sobbed, "take my boy, yea, take him from me; only one thing I beseech you, for the trust that his father put in you ever, and for the trust I put in you now, guard and keep him from harm." Then she significantly added: "Ye think, forsooth, I fear too much; see that ye fear not too little." Very heart-rending must have been that parting scene between the fond mother and the gentle child, so soon to be cruelly murdered. With passionate eagerness she clasped her boy to her breast, and covering him with kisses, sobbed aloud. "Farewell mine own sweet son," faltered the heartbroken mother, "farewell. God send you good keeping: let me kiss you, let me kiss you once more ere ye go, for God only knoweth when we shall kiss again." "Then," says the writer who narrates this touching scene, "she kissed and blessed the boy over and over again; then turned her back and wept bitterly, going her way, leaving the poor innocent child weeping as fast as the mother."*

Still believing that all would be well, the Cardinal led the young prince forth, and carried him at once to the Star Chamber, where his base uncle received him with every mark of affection. Raising him in his arms, he kissed away the tears which still hung on the child's cheek, exclaiming, "Now welcome, my lord, with all my heart, right welcome." A few short hours had passed, and the little Duke was a prisoner with his brother in the Tower. Richard's vile scheme was speedily accomplished. Privately, he made known his dark design to the Duke of Buckingham, who had already stood his friend in the Council. This unprincipled nobleman soon fell into the Duke's scheme for getting rid of the royal children, and promised to do all in his power to further it. Meanwhile Richard, in order to deceive and put the nobles off their guard, ordered the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, with the Lord Hastings, to prepare for the King's coronation. A few days afterwards, this nobleman, together with Lord Rivers and the Earl Grey, were brought to execution, without the least shadow of justice. The nation was thunder-struck. Richard's real intentions were now no longer concealed.

* *Sir Thomas More's Life of Edward V.*

The deceitful and profane, though they care neither for God nor man, are always glad to make use of religion when it seems to further their sinful schemes. It was so with Richard. One is grieved to find that, at this juncture, a minister of God could be found vile enough to give his countenance and assistance to Richard's guilty designs. Dr. Shaw, whose name must ever be associated with what is base and contemptible, was a man greatly admired by a large class of the community. He was the popular preacher of those days, and attracted hundreds by his brilliant oratory and seeming earnestness. Popularity was the snare that ruined Shaw, as it has ruined the souls of many others; and, to secure it, he was willing to sacrifice honour, truth, and principle. You have heard, I dare say, of St. Paul's Cross, where the great preachers of England, in olden times, were wont to address the people. On Sunday, June 19th, 1483, a multitude of Londoners assembled themselves on this spot to listen to the words of their popular preacher. Shaw, having been before instructed in the art of dissimulation, and bribed by the wily Duke, delivered an harangue which, in profanity and open shamelessness, has, I think, seldom been surpassed. After having wrested the words of Holy Scripture to suit his purpose, Shaw tried to prove that Edward V. had no right to the Crown. but that Richard, Duke of Gloucester, was the only true heir. The preacher, warming with his subject, then proceeded to enlarge on Richard's excellences, and even to extol his personal appearance! It must have been a weak cause which could need the help of such glaring misstatements. A clever scene had been preconcerted, that the people might be duly impressed, and induced to acknowledge Richard as King. At this remarkable point in the harangue, the Protector was to have made his appearance. For Shaw hoped, that by seizing the critical moment, the people would be prevailed on to close with the flattery, and cry out "King Richard!" The whole thing, however, proved a signal failure. The Protector being behind his time, the Doctor endeavoured to retrieve the opportunity by repeating the words. But sentiment so false and absurd would not bear repetition. The multitude began to hiss, and to show manifest signs of disapprobation; so the craven priest was forced to beat an ignominious retreat, amid the hoots and groans of the populace. Like Hananiah, the false prophet of old, who for making the people of Judah trust in a lie,* fell under the curse of the Almighty, and died the same year, so retribution came upon Shaw. He died shortly afterwards, "the shame of the *varication* and miscarriage of his sermon hastening his end."†

* Jer. xxviii. 15-17

† Collier.

But the ice was broken. Richard's dark designs were now fully exposed; and like a gambler who had staked his all in one venture, he determined to carry out his desperate game even to the death. Partly by bribery, partly by dissimulation, Richard contrived to induce some of the people to proclaim him King; and three days afterwards, by the aid of the false Duke of Buckingham, he was publicly crowned King of England, the ceremony being performed with the same preparations which had been provided for his hapless nephew. In his dreary imprisonment in the Tower, the young prince heard of the violent proceedings of his uncle. Gladly would he have changed places with the meanest subject in his realm. From that hour he anticipated his sad end, and fell into a state of profound melancholy, his childish and more light-hearted brother trying in vain to rouse him. "From that hour," says Sir Thomas More, "the young King never tied his points, nor anything regarding himself, but with that babe his brother lingered in thought and heaviness, till their uncle's treacherous deed delivered them from their wretchedness." Bitterly the poor boy was heard to exclaim, "Alas! alas! I would mine uncle would let me have my life, although I lose my kingdom." Such, however, was not Richard's intention. He wrote to Sir Robert Brackenbury, Constable of the Tower, entreating him privately to make away with the princes. But Brackenbury was too noble-minded a man to consent to be instrumental in so dastardly a deed, and he flatly refused to have anything to do with it. Richard took no pains to conceal his annoyance. "Ah! whom can a man trust," he exclaimed, "when they that I have brought up myself — they that I thought would have most surely served me — will do nothing for me?" "Sire," said a page who overheard Richard's angry exclamation, "there lieth one in the Palet Chamber yonder without, that I dare say will do your grace's pleasure, for in good sooth the thing were right hard that he would refuse." James Tyrell, the man to whom the page alluded, was an unscrupulous and ambitious ruffian, who, hoping to rise into favour with the usurper, gladly undertook the murderous deed. It is needless for me to repeat the sad story, so familiar to us all from early childhood. No mortal eye watched the murderers as they smothered their innocent victims, and hastily buried them at the foot of the staircase. But one eye — the eye of the omnipresent God — saw the foul deed, and visited the authors of it with signal retribution. Tyrell, some years afterwards, suffered a traitor's death on the scaffold; while *Richard was only permitted to wear the crown he had sinned so deeply to obtain for two short years. During that time,*

true peace, which God alone can give, was unknown to the usurper. Haunted by the wildest fancies, and terrified by hideous dreams, Richard would spring from his couch, and pace distractedly to and fro. He tried to repent of his sins; he bestowed large sums on the Church; he endeavoured by every means in his power to conciliate his people, and win their affection; but all in vain. Rest and ease of mind would never more return to the man who had bartered eternal happiness for the fleeting honours of the world. There is no need for me to dwell on the revolution which happily placed Henry of Richmond on the throne of England. As in Richard II.'s time, so now, an ecclesiastic was the chief actor in this event.

Morton, Bishop of Ely, had been most unjustly imprisoned by Richard; and, partly from private resentment, partly for the good of the nation, he crossed over to France, and hastening into Henry's presence, entreated him to come over to England, and win the Crown, which so many were eager to place on his head. Morton also showed his wisdom by urging Henry to unite the rival houses of York and Lancaster, by wedding the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV. The Earl was not long in making up his mind. He gladly consented to both requests, and landing at Milford Haven, was soon joined by numbers of honest Englishmen, who, wearied out by Richard's cruelties, welcomed their new sovereign with joyful acclamations. The rival armies met on the field of Bosworth, in Leicestershire. Richard, though a bad man, was no coward. He fought for his crown and life with the desperation of a ruined man. But both were lost. The usurper fell covered with wounds, and his crown was placed on the head of his rival. How true are those words of the wise man of old: "He that worketh mischief, it shall fall upon him."* To which we may add the well-known words of inspiration, "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished;"† but they "shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it."‡

* Ecclesiasticus xxvii. 27.

† Prov. xi. 21.

‡ Prov. ii. 22.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

HENRY VII.—1485 to 1489.

HENRY'S PIOUS CONDUCT ON THE BATTLE-FIELD — THE CHURCHMEN OF THE TIME SUPPORT HIS CLAIM—BISHOP MORTON'S CONDUCT DEFENDED—HE IS ELECTED BY HENRY TO THE PRIMACY—HIS DEVOTION TO THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER — HIS WISDOM AND PIETY — HENRY'S UNPOPULARITY — HIS AVARICIOUSNESS, AND HATRED TOWARDS THE HOUSE OF YORK — POPULARITY OF THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH — HENRY POSTPONES HER CORONATION, BUT IS AT LENGTH COMPELLED TO CONSENT TO THE CEREMONY — IMPOSTURE OF PERKIN WARBECK — ARCHBISHOP MORTON SHARES HENRY'S UNPOPULARITY—HE REFUSES TO COUNTENANCE THE KING'S EXTORTIONS—CRAFTY CONDUCT OF RICHARD, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER—HE CLEVERLY CONTRIVES TO EXTORT MONEY FROM THE CLERGY—ARCHBISHOP MORTON'S WISE CONDUCT—HE ENDEAVOURS TO RESTRAIN THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF THE CLERGY — STATE OF THE PAROCHIAL CLERGY AT THIS PERIOD—THEIR IGNORANCE AND INDIFFERENCE—HOW THE BISHOPS OF ENGLAND HAD AT DIFFERENT TIMES ENDEAVOURED TO COMBAT THE EVIL, BUT IN VAIN.

THE eventful battle of Bosworth Field placed Henry, as we have seen, in possession of the Crown of England. He was not unthankful to God for the victory ; and like his illustrious ancestors, Edward III. and Henry V., piously refused to attribute the success of the enterprise to his own prowess. We read that Henry knelt down before the whole army, and “ rendered to Almighty God his hearty thanks with devout and godly orisons beseeching His goodness to send him grace to advance and defend the Catholic faith, and to maintain justice and concord among the subjects and people whom God had now committed to his governance.”* As the King rose from his knees, the joyful praises of the soldiers were wafted on the summer breeze afar over the Leicestershire downs, as they chanted, in a loud voice, the solemn and inspiring words of the *Te Deum*. Few kings received a heartier welcome than Henry VII. For all honest-minded men hated and despised the usurper Richard, and joyfully hailed the approach of the Lancastrian prince, who had come to free them from the dominion of the false and cruel tyrant. Nearly all the Bishops appear to have fully recognized Henry's title to the crown ; and most of them continued faithful to him, when the rest of the people regarded him with suspicion and dislike. Foremost among the loyal churchmen was Bishop Morton, who, you remember, had persuaded Henry to do battle for the crown. We cannot in this case accuse Morton of rebellion against his lawful sovereign ; for Richard was no lawful king ; and even had he been, his crimes might well have excused his subjects from all loyal service. That this was Morton's

* *Sir Thomas More's Life of Richard III.*

own view of the case is clear from the words he addressed to Henry, when urging him to lay claim to the crown. "Richard," said the Bishop, "is neither meet to be king of so noble a realm, nor so famous a realm meet to be governed by such a tyrant. Was not his first enterprise to obtain the crown begun and intercepted by the murder of divers valiant, true, and noble personages? And after he had obtained the garland for which he had so long thirsted, he caused the two poor innocents, his nephews, committed to him on special trust, to be murdered and shamefully killed; the blood of which innocent babes daily cries to God from the earth for vengeance. Now, my lord," he added, with increased fervour, "ye must yourself take upon ye the crown and diadem of this noble empire, both for the maintenance and honour of the same, and also for the deliverance of your natural countrymen from the bondage and thralldom of so cruel a tyrant and so arrogant an oppressor."

When, after the battle of Bosworth, Henry became undisputed possessor of the crown, he was not unmindful of Morton's services, but shortly after the death of Archbishop Bouchier, he contrived to procure the election of his friend to the vacant primacy. Apart from the loyal service which Morton had rendered Henry, there were other reasons which bound him closely to the Primate. A Lancastrian to the backbone, Henry showed the littleness of his mind by displaying, on every occasion, his antipathy to the House of York. So that the faithfulness with which Morton had served his saintly predecessor Henry VI. raised him tenfold in the estimation of Henry of Richmond. It was this very faithfulness to the House of Lancaster which had drawn down upon the Bishop the wrath of the usurper Richard; while the fact that Morton had suffered imprisonment for the cause rendered him doubly dear in the eyes of his present sovereign. Archbishop Morton was a man of singular courage and integrity. When nearly every Englishman, either for their own selfish ends, or from fear, tolerated and even connived at Richard's usurpation, he boldly refused to sanction it, and suffered accordingly. There can be no doubt that Henry's choice was a wise one. At a time when the greater part of the inferior clergy led useless, self-indulgent, and in some cases even criminal lives, it is pleasant to be able to dwell on the character of a churchman like Archbishop Morton, so full of wisdom, judgment, and honest goodness. Henry had many faults; but that he was able to *respect and appreciate* such a man is a proof that he possessed *considerable* penetration, and was not wanting in right feeling. *But Henry, though on the whole a religious man, and a wise*

King, failed to secure the affections of his people. His cold stateliness of manner served to chill rather than to rouse their feelings of loyalty, while his grasping policy and undisguised avarice disgusted and irritated his subjects. They soon learned to look with suspicion on a sovereign who seemed intent only on enriching himself at their expense, and who invariably made it a rule to suspect those who had not given open proofs of loyalty to his person. Again, Henry mortally offended his people by the hatred he displayed towards the House of York. There can be no doubt that the Yorkist party was the popular one. The courteous and princely behaviour of Edward IV. was yet fresh in the minds of the people, while the suffering the country had endured during the weak rule of Henry VI. was still remembered with horror. Added to this, the House of York could bring forward by far the best title to the throne; indeed, unless Henry had been willing to act upon Morton's prudent advice, with regard to his marriage, I think he would scarcely have been allowed to hold his crown in peace. Henry's union with the Princess Elizabeth of York for ever joined the rival factions, and at once put a stop to all further murmurings and discontent. One pities the gentle princess who for the public good was compelled to spend her life with a husband who hated her family, and at the best treated her with a reverent and cold courtesy. The people were well aware of this; and it added in no small degree to Henry's unpopularity. The gentle manners and condescending behaviour of the Princess had endeared her to the people, who were delighted to trace in her a resemblance to her popular father. When Henry solemnised his marriage with the Princess, he had the mortification to observe that his subjects showed far greater joy and satisfaction than they had done either at his own coronation or at his first entry into London. Irritated and annoyed, he foolishly determined to show his dissatisfaction by withholding from his gentle Queen her just due. He alone would be King. None should share the right to reign with him. Therefore the coronation of Elizabeth was to be postponed for an indefinite period. Under these circumstances it is easy to imagine that various plots against Henry were set on foot; while impostors arose, one of whom even feigned himself to be the rightful heir to the throne. You have all read the tale of Perkin Warbeck, who so cleverly managed to personate the young Duke of York, whom all hitherto believed to have been murdered by his uncle in the Tower. I shall not here enter upon the history of these impostors, which have little to do with church events. They, however, opened the King's

eyes to the necessity of humouring his subjects; and so to smooth matters, and render himself more popular, he consented to the coronation of his Queen; which event was shortly afterwards solemnised with considerable splendour and great public rejoicing. Archbishop Morton showed himself on almost every occasion a wise statesman and an earnest Christian. But though he had undoubtedly the good of his church and country at heart, he was never popular. The fact is easily explained. His firm attachment to Henry, and the vigour with which he supported all his schemes, involved him in the King's unpopularity, although, I think, most unjustly. Many of the bishops, it is true, supported Henry in his obnoxious measures, and assisted him in extorting money from his subjects. But Archbishop Morton was too conscientious a man to countenance even his sovereign when he believed him to be in the wrong. On several occasions he boldly reproached Henry for his love of money and unjust extortions, and was willing to brave the King's displeasure rather than be silent. Very different was the conduct of Richard, Bishop of Winchester, who willingly seconded Henry in his avaricious designs. Holinshed gives us an amusing account of the crafty, clever manner in which the reverend extortioner managed to empty the pockets of his fellow-ecclesiastics. The King, well aware of the qualities of Richard, appointed him his commissioner to collect money from the clergy; and we must own he performed his obnoxious task in a very clever manner. A large body of ecclesiastics assembled themselves on the appointed day. Such a body of clergy, as the writer remarks, may generally be divided into two classes, "half of them being, as a rule, wealthy, seemly, and comely; the other half pretending poverty, baseness, and scarcity." Both these parties, it proved, were equally unwilling to disburse for the King's benefit. The wealthy priests spoke first: "Though God," they said, "hath indeed bestowed this world's goods upon us, we are daily at great charges and expenses in keeping of hospitality, in maintaining ourselves, our houses, and our families; and so we are verily bare and poor, and do beg to be excused." The poorer priests then demanded a hearing. "Our *linings*,"* said they, "are truly small and slender; we are scarce able to maintain ourselves, and so we are forced to go bare, and lead a hard and poor life. Therefore, having nothing, we pray to be excused." The words of both parties were undoubtedly specious words; but our *bishop* was quite equal to the occasion, and adroitly confounded *them* by their own arguments. Turning towards his wealthy

* Incomes.

brethren, he quietly said, "It is true ye are at great charges, and well beseem in your apparel, well mounted upon your fair palfreys, and have your men waiting upon you in good order; your hospitality is good, and your daily expenses large; all which things are plain demonstrations of your wealth and ability; otherwise ye could not be at such voluntary charges. Now, having store to spend in such order," continued the Bishop, "there is no reason but to your prince ye should be much more well willing, ready to yield yourselves contributory and dutiful. Therefore," he concluded, with the air of a man who would take no refusal, "ye must pay." Then, turning to the poorer clergy, who with abject countenances watched the proceedings, he said, "Albeit your linings be not of the best, yet good, sufficient, and able to maintain you in fair estate, it appeareth truly that ye are frugal and thrifty men, and what others do voluntarily spend in apparel, house, and family, ye warily do keep and have it to lie by you, and therefore it is good reason that of your store ye should spare with a good will, and contribute to your prince; therefore be contented," said the Bishop, with a provoking smile, "ye shall pay." And "so," quaintly remarks Holinshed, "by this pretty dilemma, he induced them all to yield a good payment to the King."

As a man's acts bespeak his real character, I shall show you how prudently Archbishop Morton acted with regard to the abuses which had crept into the Church. At a synod held in the year 1487 he made some very good rules for the government of his province. Among other things, he endeavoured to check the intemperance of those preachers who were continually inveighing against the bishops, and holding them up to public scorn, that they might pander to the evil taste of the period, and so rise into popularity. At this time, the clergy of London appear to have made themselves notorious by their extravagance and costly style of apparel. Archbishop Morton prohibited them from appearing in any garb which could bring odium on the cause which, as God's servants, they were bound to uphold; and at the same time he peremptorily forbade their frequenting the public taverns. What an insight does this simple fact give us into the state of morals of God's priests at this period! If such a law were necessary, how great must have been the need of some reform in their manners and mode of life!

Now that I am speaking on this subject, and we are approaching so near to the period of the Reformation, I think I cannot do better than give you a short sketch of the state of *the parochial clergy at this time*. Although many of the parish

priests were good and self-denying men, we cannot but own that as a body they had sadly degenerated. By their worldliness and indifference they were rapidly losing all hold on the love and respect of the people. In such a case as this the evil is not confined to the clergy alone. It is a sad fact that when God's priests become indolent, and, like Hophni and Phineas of old, fall into wilful sin, "the offering of the Lord is abhorred," while His most sacred ordinances are treated with contempt and ridicule. As a necessary consequence of this, the people become ignorant, indifferent, and careless; and, finding that their spiritual guides, who have sworn to uphold and preach the religion of their Divine Master, break with impunity His most solemn precepts, they begin to doubt the necessity of any religious faith at all, and so become an easy prey to the devil and his wiles. So early as the reign of Henry V. it was the general complaint that the clergy (who in many cases owned several benefices) "were devoted only to pleasure and gain, spent their time in the cities, or at the courts of lords, intent only on their banquets and their cups." The state of the law only tended to make matters worse. Priests, who were guilty of the grossest crimes, escaped punishment; for they could only receive judgment in the ecclesiastical courts, which, you remember, had no power to inflict death on the offender. "So great," we are told, "was the reverence paid to Holy Orders, that a priest, although he had committed high treason against the King, or any other offence equally criminal, his life was invariably spared."*

We have seen how Archbishop Morton endeavoured to control the attire of the worldly clergy; for during Archbishop Bourchier's time they had by their reckless extravagance become an open scandal to the Church, many of them, it was said, "dressing more like gallants or knights than priests, with scarlet doublets to their collars, &c. But more than this, the inferior clergy were most of them deplorably ignorant; some having never learnt to read their own language, while they were wholly ignorant of Latin, in which tongue all the services of the Church were performed."† The bishops nobly endeavoured from time to time to combat this great evil. They made wise laws for the government of their own dioceses, while, we have seen, the greater part of them strove in their daily lives to set an example of earnestness and consistency to their clergy. But while the Pope of Rome reigned supreme head of the Church, and claimed *the right* to nominate to all vacant benefices, it was of little use *for the bishops of England* to raise their voices. The Roman

* Holinshed.

† Massingberd.

pontiffs for the most part filled the English livings with foreigners, who had little sympathy with their people, and were too often men of indolent, dissolute lives. You have read how, at different periods, the patriot kings of England passed laws forbidding the Pope to intermeddle with the English Church. But the papal power was by this time so firmly established, that even these wise laws were frequently set at nought, and the authority both of the sovereigns and prelates of England defied.

CHAPTER XLIX.

HENRY VII. *continued*.—1489 to 1509.

SAD CONDITION OF THE MONASTERIES AT THIS PERIOD—PROFLIGATE CONDUCT OF THEIR INMATES—SUPPRESSION OF THE ABBEY OF SELBORNE AND SEVERAL OTHERS—POPE INNOCENT GIVES THE PROPERTY OF THE ABBEY TO BISHOP WAYNFLETE, WHO TRANSFERS IT TO MAGDALEN COLLEGE AT OXFORD—MARGARET, COUNTESS OF RICHMOND, FOLLOWS HIS EXAMPLE—THE POPE GIVES ARCHBISHOP MORTON AUTHORITY TO INQUIRE INTO THE ABUSES OF THE MONASTIC SYSTEM—HE VISITS THE ABBEY OF ST. ALBAN'S—INIQUITOUS CONDUCT OF THE ABBOT, AND PROFLIGACY OF THE MONKS—TESTIMONY OF THE BISHOPS OF THIS PERIOD TO BE RELIED ON—HENRY TRIES TO INDUCE THE POPE TO CANONIZE HENRY VI., BUT FAILS—ARCHBISHOP MORTON SUCCEEDS IN OBTAINING THE CANONIZATION OF ARCHBISHOP ANSELM—HENRY IS ABLY SUPPORTED BY HIS CLERGY—GOOD AND WISE CONDUCT OF FOX, BISHOP OF DURHAM—HE HEALS THE FEUD BETWEEN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND, AND BRINGS ABOUT THE MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCESS MARGARET WITH KING JAMES OF SCOTLAND—DEATH OF THE ARCHBISHOP—WARHAM, BISHOP OF LONDON, IS ELECTED TO THE PRIMACY—HIS WISDOM AND PRUDENCE—PAPAL EXACTIONS—POPE ALEXANDER AND HENRY SHARE THE SPOIL BETWEEN THEM—DISGUST OF THE NATION—HENRY'S PIETY—FEW PERSONS SUFFER DEATH FOR HERESY IN HIS REIGN—HENRY'S HUMANE POLICY—HIS CHARACTER AS GIVEN BY LORD BACON—STORY OF THE NOTE-BOOK—HENRY VII.'S STately CHAPEL AT WESTMINSTER.

THE condition of the monks in many of the monasteries, as I have already shown you, was quite as bad as that of the parochial clergy. The golden age of the Venerable Bede, the holy Columba, and the saintly Aidan, had passed away, and was succeeded by a period of irreligion, indifference, and open profligacy. To imagine that the heads of the Church wilfully blinded their eyes to the corruptions of the monastic system is utterly false. Many good bishops from time to time endeavoured to combat the evil. We have seen how William of Wykeham refused to bestow *his* wealth in the founding a monastery, but *preferred establishing* colleges where the youths of England

might be trained to Holy Orders. His example was followed by many other worthy and enlightened prelates, who, so far from desiring to withhold the knowledge of the truth from their fellow-men, bestowed their wealth and energies on the good work of instructing the ignorant. It is to be remarked that some of the monasteries were on the point of dissolution, in consequence of the profligate and indolent condition of their inmates. The stately abbey of Selborne, in Hampshire, deserted by its prior and canons, was rapidly falling into decay. Bishop Wykeham, who, in common with the rest of the Bishops of Winchester, was patron of the priory of Selborne, did his utmost to reform the monks and preserve the monastery, but without effect. His successor, the patriotic and munificent William of Waynflete, followed in his steps. He would fain have saved from ruin this sacred and time-honoured retreat, which for two hundred and fifty-four years had existed to do God's work among the people. But all in vain. Its own corruption hastened its fall. It is a remarkable fact that in the year 1486, Pope Innocent VIII. himself suppressed the priory of Selborne, that is, he appropriated the endowment or property of the monastery, dispersing such of the monks as remained.* To the honour of Pope Innocent, he bestowed the property of the suppressed monastery on the good Bishop Waynflete, who at once transferred it to his newly-founded college, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, at Oxford. Margaret, Countess of Richmond, the mother of Henry VII., also founded several colleges out of the endowment of suppressed monasteries, which had been ruined by the profligate lives of the monks. "These monks," says Fisher, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, "have ruined themselves by their lust and riot, sold their plate, mortgaged their lands, and are now wandering abroad, subsisting as they may in total neglect of Divine service and of all their other duties."

I would have you observe that the property of all these suppressed monasteries, although diverted from its original channel, was still employed for the benefit of the Church, not one farthing of the money thus consecrated to God being claimed by any private person. Would that those who in after years suppressed these ancient seats of learning had acted in the same spirit of piety! The honest and conscientious mind of Archbishop Morton was deeply pained at the sad decay of discipline among the monks, and he determined to do his utmost to combat the evil. Happily, he was vigorously supported by Pope Innocent, who *appears to have been an enlightened Christian man, and one who was not afraid to own the evil which he tried to correct. In the*

* White's History of Selborne, p. 255.

year 1489, he addressed a bull to the Primate, empowering him to break through all rules, and visit in person the different monasteries, that those of the monks who were leading unholy lives might be exposed and punished. "The ancient rules of many of these orders," says the Pope in his bull, "have been abandoned, while in too many instances the inmates of these sacred houses are living like persons given up to a reprobate sense, having cast off the fear of God, and all regard for the opinion of men." Archbishop Morton's first visit was to St. Alban's. This venerable and stately Benedictine abbey had been for centuries associated in the minds of the people with all that was most sacred in the history of their Church and country. But, to the grief of the pious and to the triumph of the infidel, it had now become an open scandal to the religion of Christ. In former times many abbots of St. Alban's, by their pious and consistent lives, had shed around their monastery a halo of sanctity and usefulness; but it appears that at the time Archbishop Morton visited it, things were sadly changed. The Abbot reluctantly unbarred to him the massive portals of the monastery, for he was a man utterly unworthy of the sacred post he held. He appears to have grossly neglected to provide for the service of the abbey church. He encouraged his monks in leading dissolute, idle lives; while those who would honestly have observed the rules of their order he persecuted with unfeigned hatred. "By the Abbot's sinful conduct," exclaims the godly Primate, "his monks are given up to all kinds of sin, the Divine service almost wholly neglected, while those who are disposed to live religiously are persecuted and hated. Alas!" he bitterly exclaims, "that the seat of such sacred memorials should ever be so disgraced."*

The testimony of the bishops of this period with regard to the corruptions of the monastic system is, I think, fully to be relied upon—far more so than the testimony of those who came after, who in many instances had private reasons of their own for representing the evils of the monasteries in the darkest colours. Archbishop Morton knew how to appreciate a system which in times of anarchy and lawlessness had preserved the true faith; for he would fain have saved it from falling. When, therefore, he complains of its abuses, we may be sure he is not wilfully exaggerating them. As we shall see by-and-by, those who were intent on destroying these ancient seats of learning eagerly believed and were glad to propagate every idle fable which the spite of fanaticism could invent against them. There can be no doubt that many of the idle tales then so common

* Massingberd.

with regard to the monasteries were as false as they were cruel. But I shall have to speak more of this hereafter.

In the year 1549, Henry, who appears to have felt a sincere regard for the character of his Lancastrian predecessor, Henry VI., endeavoured to prevail on the Pope to canonize his favourite, "hoping thereby," as Fuller says, "to add lustre to the line of Lancaster." The list of saints had already swelled to an inconvenient extent; and I have little doubt that many in that category had less right to be there than the pious, simple-minded Henry. But Pope Alexander refused the King's request, not considering that Henry VI. had a right to claim such dignity. At the same time he was pleased to acquaint his royal petitioner with the requisites necessary to make a saint. Fuller, with his usual quaintness, thus enumerates them:—"First, that to confer that honour (the greatest on earth) was only in the power of the Pope, the proper judge of men's merits therein. Secondly, that saints were not to be multiplied but on just notions, lest commonness should cause their contempt. Thirdly, that his life must be exemplary holy, by the testimony of two witnesses. And, lastly, his holiness brought forward an objection which at once commended itself to the mind of the thrifty King. The cost of such canonization, concludes the Pope, will be great, because all chanters, choristers, bell-ringers (for, remarks Fuller, not the least clapper of the steeple would wag, unless money be tied to the rope), with all the officers of the church of St. Peter, together with the commissaries and notaries of the court; with all the officers of the Pope's bedchamber, to the very locksmiths, ought to have their several fees of such canonization. Verily, the sum total would amount to fifteen hundred ducats of gold!"

Such an argument was unanswerable. This formidable list of greedy applicants decided the matter, and Henry was forced, reluctantly, to drop the subject. The Primate Morton was more successful in his suit. He procured from the Pope the canonization of Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury who, you remember, took so prominent a part in public affairs during the reigns of William Rufus and Henry I. "This saintship," remarks Fuller, "was procured on cheaper terms, although even this cost Archbishop Morton much money." By such means did the pontiffs of Rome replenish their coffers.

To return to Henry. With all his faults, there must have been something very sterling in his character, for he seems to have possessed the power of attaching to his person the best and wisest men of his time. His bishops were always ready to do him a good turn. On one occasion Fox, Bishop of Durham,

adroitly managed to avert a war between England and Scotland. At the same time, he contrived to advance Henry's interests and the good of his country, so that he remained ever after in high favour with the King. A jealous feeling had always existed between the Scotch and the English, and many were the frays and skirmishes which took place on the northern borders. One day it happened that a body of young Scottish gentlemen passed the castle of Norham, which was garrisoned by English soldiers, and went into the town to divert themselves. While they were in the act of carousing and merry-making, the garrison of the castle sallied forth, and attacking the unsuspecting revellers, wounded several, and forced the rest to beat a precipitate retreat. The news of this shameless assault soon reached the ears of James, the King of Scotland. He at once sent a sharp letter to Henry, demanding instant redress. Meanwhile Fox, Bishop of Durham, in whose diocese the castle of Norham was situated, determined, like a true peacemaker, to heal the dangerous breach. He accordingly sent a conciliatory letter to the King of Scotland, offering to make full and entire satisfaction, according to his highness's wishes. Delighted with the Bishop's honesty and frankness, James invited him to a personal interview, that the matter might be amicably adjusted between them. The King and Bishop met together within the stately abbey of Melrose. There must have been something very forcible and straightforward in the Bishop's reasoning, for the King listened with reverent attention, and when he had ended, frankly extended his hand, in token that peace between the two countries was fully established. James then took the opportunity of propounding a scheme which he had long had at heart. It was that Henry's eldest daughter Margaret should be given him in marriage. Fox gladly consented to do his best to further the King's wishes; for he foresaw that such an alliance would secure to the two countries the peace he had himself so earnestly striven to promote. By the wise advice of the Bishop, whose opinion Henry rightly valued, he gladly consented to the proposed union. Some in the English council appear to have objected to the match, on the ground that England might by such alliance fall under the dominion of Scotland. "Nay," rejoined the shrewd, far-seeing monarch, "Scotland in that event will only become an accession to England."* And so indeed it proved. In the reign of James I., who was the great-grandson of the Princess Margaret, the two kingdoms were happily united into one. Remember, when you read of this great historical event, which secured to both kingdoms the blessing of peace, that it

* Hume, vol. iii., p. 386.

was brought about by the exertions of Fox, Bishop of Durham, in the reign of Henry VII. How true it is that one righteous act, although little heeded at the time, may cast a ray of blessing over succeeding generations! We may not be permitted to see the result of our good deeds during our own lifetime; yet God, in His own good time, will surely make their influence felt.

In the year 1500, Bishop Morton died. You have seen that he was an earnest Christian man, and did his duty conscientiously and well. He remained to the last the King's chief minister; for he was an able statesman, and Henry placed entire confidence in his judgment and honesty. His successor in the primacy, Archbishop Dean, only lived two years to enjoy the dignity; and then we find, in 1503, Warham, Bishop of London, elected to the post. Henry's choice was again a prudent one; for Warham was a man of earnest piety, full of discretion and charity; a character well adapted to cope with the startling events which in a few years afterwards dawned upon the Church.

The cautious Henry contrived to keep on good terms with the Pope, and appears to have been as great a favourite with his holiness as he was with his own clergy. Fuller, with his usual love of the ridiculous, dwells on the fact that the money which the Pope collected from the English people, though safely housed in the papal coffers, was afterwards shared by the covetous Henry, who, to the infinite disgust of his subjects, appropriated to himself a portion of the rich treasure which had been so unjustly extorted from their pockets. "Thus," remarks the same witty writer, "while Pope and Prince shared the wool between them, the people were finely fleeced." You can well imagine that such mean conduct rendered Henry most unpopular; and when his death came it was hailed as a public blessing, rather than mourned as a national calamity. Yet Henry had his good points, and they ought not to be overlooked. He certainly showed an outward regard for holy things, which, in a person of such elevated rank, must ever produce a good result; for the example of the sovereign gives a tone to the feeling of a whole nation. Things prospered in Henry's hand, and the country flourished; yet he piously believed that the prayers of good men would "avail much," and that, if he ignored God's overruling providence, things would soon go badly with him. It was this feeling of simple faith which induced Henry to engage the services of pious men, whose prayers he valued, *that they might daily offer up at the throne of grace their petitions for himself and his family.*

During Henry's reign comparatively few persons suffered

death for heresy, although some writers have asserted the contrary. Lord Bacon, who wrote the life of this King, says, "that proceedings against heretics were rare during his reign, and that penances were enjoined rather than death." Henry, though stern and unyielding to a degree, was not a cruel man, and on several occasions gave proofs of a humane disposition. He appears to have followed in Bishop Pecock's steps, and "preferred winning over the Lollards by persuasion, rather than by threats." For, though the King was no good schoolman, remarks the writer I have before quoted, "he had the honour to convert one of these people by dispute at Canterbury."* A few words more on the character of Henry, and I have done. Unlike most men, Henry appears to have been altogether independent of the influence of the softer sex. Lord Bacon thus describes him: "He was of a high mind; he loved his own will, and his own way, as one that recovered himself and would reign indeed; he was governed by none. His queen, though she had presented him with divers children, and with a crown also (though he would not acknowledge it), could do nothing with him. His mother he revered much, heard little. He was a comely personage, a little above just stature, well and straight-limbed, but slender. His countenance was reverend, and a little like a churchman; and as it was not strange or dark, so was it neither winning nor pleasing, but as the face of one well-disposed."

I have told you that Henry was naturally of a suspicious disposition; and there is no doubt that the plots and impostures which were so rife in his time made him the more distrustful of those about him. Lord Bacon tells us it was his custom to carry in his pocket a private note-book, in which he was wont to dot down, from time to time, remarks on the behaviour of the nobles who frequented his court, in order that he might keep a strict eye on all their movements. You can well imagine that it was with no friendly feeling that the courtiers regarded the suspicious little volume which the wary monarch so often drew from his pocket. There is an amusing story told of how, on one occasion, they vented their spite on the offending book. One morning the King, who was in an unusually pensive humour, laid the note-book, in an absent manner, down on the table; and when his back was turned, the wily nobles set his majesty's favourite monkey on it, who, delighted with the mischievous freak, soon tore every leaf to shreds. The sedate Henry burst into a hearty laugh at this practical sally, and good-humouredly *taking the hint*, never ordered a fresh note-book.

* Lord Bacon's Life of Henry VII.

Henry VII.'s regal pomp and splendour followed him to the grave. The chapel erected by him in Westminster Abbey, and which contains his costly monument, is one of the finest specimens we possess of the Perpendicular style of architecture. One stands entranced with awe and admiration at the elaborate beauty of this stately chapel, which even at this distant period seems as if it had but just sprung from the hands of the cunning architect, so fresh and delicate are its details. Well may we echo back Lord Bacon's words of approval. He thus speaks of Henry's last resting-place: "Henry was buried at Westminster, in one of the stateliest, daintiest monuments of Europe, both the chapel and the sepulchre; so that he dwelleth more richly *dead* in the monument of his tomb, than he did *alive* in Richmond or any of his palaces."*

CHAPTER L.

HENRY VIII.—1509 to 1515.

PUBLIC REJOICING ON THE ACCESSION OF HENRY VIII.—BRILLIANT PROSPECTS OF HENRY—HIS LEARNING AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS—VARIOUS OPINIONS FORMED OF HIS CHARACTER—THOMAS WOLSEY—HIS GOOD ABILITIES—HE HAD ALREADY RISEN INTO FAVOUR WITH HENRY VII., WHO HAD EMPLOYED HIM ON A DIFFICULT EMBASSY—HIS CHARACTER—HENRY VIII. CONCEIVES A STRONG AFFECTION FOR WOLSEY—HIS RAPID RISE—HENRY'S COUNCILLORS ADVISE HIM TO TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN THE AFFAIRS OF HIS KINGDOM—WOLSEY INGRATIATES HIMSELF WITH THE KING BY OFFERING TO TAKE ON HIMSELF THE BURDEN OF STATE AFFAIRS—HIS AFFECTION FOR HENRY—WOLSEY IS PRESENTED TO THREE BISHOPRICS IN ONE YEAR—HIS UNBOUNDED AMBITION—HE NEXT OBTAINS THE CARDINAL'S HAT, AND IS MADE PAPAL LEGATE—DETERMINED ATTEMPT TO DO AWAY WITH THE LAW WHICH EXEMPTED THE CLERGY FROM JUDGMENT IN THE SECULAR COURTS—VIOLENT OPPOSITION OF THE ABBOT OF WINCHELCOMB—THE MATTER IS ARGUED BEFORE THE KING—DR. STANDISH, WARDEN OF THE MENDICANT FRIARS, ARGUES AGAINST THE CLERGY—SAD STORY OF JOHN HUNN—INCREASED ANIMOSITY AGAINST THE MONKS AND CLERGY—THE KING CALLS A LARGE MEETING OF CLERGY AND LAITY AT BAYNARD'S CASTLE, TO DECIDE THE MATTER—CARDINAL WOLSEY'S SPEECH—HENRY'S RESOLUTE AND TYRANNICAL ANSWER—HE HUMBLER THE PRIDE OF HIS CLERGY.

UNIVERSAL was the joy of the nation when Henry VIII. ascended the throne. The selfish, crafty policy of his father, his haughty bearing, and stern reserve, had made him obnoxious as a ruler; while the frank and open disposition of the young prince, his jovial countenance, and generous behaviour, had already en-

* Lord Bacon.

deared him to the people, who were prepared to uphold his authority to the utmost. No king ever ascended the throne of England with a brighter prospect before him than Henry. The people loyal to the backbone; the royal coffers overflowing with bullion; the land at peace: what a bright vista of prosperity and usefulness opened before him! How noble the opportunities God had placed in his hands! Henry was a prince of no mean abilities. His father, who had carefully superintended his education, designed him for the See of Canterbury, had his elder brother Arthur lived, considering, as Lord Herbert remarks, that "this was the cheapest and most glorious way of disposing of a younger son."* Henry was well versed in Latin and philosophy; he had studied divinity, and had made considerable progress in music; for, we are told, two entire masses of his own composing were sung in his chapels. It is sad to think that a man like Henry, who possessed the power of doing infinite good, should ever have been guilty of such base and selfish deeds. Henry has had few advocates, and many enemies. Some regard his character as utterly vile and contemptible; yet we are bound to do him justice. Sensual and brutal as he afterwards became, we may yet trace in his character gentle touches of kindness and right feeling, and these we have no right to suppress.

I have no desire to defend or gloss over Henry's crimes; but I would endeavour to lay the facts before you, that you may form something like an unbiassed opinion of his character. Side by side with King Henry VIII. stands one of those great men who have left their stamp on the page of history, but of whose character the most opposite opinions have been formed. From our earliest childhood we have read and heard of Cardinal Wolsey, his rapid and marvellous elevation, and his equally sudden fall. I have found it difficult among the writers of our own day, and even among those of Wolsey's time, to meet with an unbiassed account of this remarkable man. Motives have been imputed to him, and conclusions have been formed on his acts, which appear to me alike false and unjust. I have concluded in taking Cavendish for my chief authority; who, although he was closely admitted into the Cardinal's confidence, and was his intimate friend and adviser, cannot be said to have been blind to his failings.

About the year 1471, Thomas Wolsey first saw the light at Ipswich. His parents were of humble rank. Modern writers assert that his father was a butcher; but as his own friend and biographer, Cavendish, together with the rest of the old writers,

* *Life of Henry VIII.*, by Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

altogether omit this circumstance, I conclude it is an addition of later times.

Wolsey showed early signs of an acute and brilliant intellect. In our own day, in this favoured land, a man of real perseverance and genius is pretty sure to rise above his less talented fellows, even though his birth be humble. It appears to have been much the same in olden times. Henry VII., shrewd and far-sighted as he was, soon discovered Wolsey's capabilities. He employed him on a difficult embassy to the German emperor. Wolsey performed his important business with so much expedition and address, that on his return, the grateful monarch rewarded him with the deanery of Lincoln, and made him his almoner. Wolsey's talents were rather brilliant than deep; but he was a man of untiring industry. He never allowed an opportunity, however insignificant, to slip away unimproved; while almost every one who came in contact with him he contrived to fascinate and win over to his interests. Though haughty and distant when occasion required, he could charm those he loved by his gentle kindness and winning manner. His affections were deep, but his passions strong. On the accession of Henry VIII., Wolsey imagined he saw before him a brilliant opening for his ambitious designs. He was not mistaken. The young King, gay, thoughtless, and full of impulse, soon became warmly attached to the almoner, who, by his generous manner and prudent conduct, found little difficulty in winding himself round Henry's heart. King Henry's grandmother, Margaret of Richmond, was a wise and energetic woman; she prevailed on the young King to choose for his councillors some of the best and most conscientious men of his kingdom. Henry Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Lord Chancellor, stands at the head of the list. Full of wisdom was the advice of these "grave councillors," as Stow calls them. "Fearing," he remarks, "lest such abundance of wealth and riches as the King was now possessed of might move his young years into riotous forgetting of himself, they gat him to be present with them when they sat in council, so as to acquaint him with matters pertaining to the politic government of the realm; but," he adds, "the young King could not endure to be troubled, being rather inclined to follow such pleasant pastimes as his youthful years did most delight in." The grave conversation and wise counsel of his older and more faithful advisers proved, indeed, most unpalatable to the selfish and indolent young prince, who never failed to *contrast* their staid demeanour with the brilliant conversation ~~and~~ ready wit of his favourite.

While Henry was chafing at the unreasonable interruption to

his pleasures, Wolsey stepped in and willingly offered to bear the burden which Henry, as sovereign of England, had no right to shift from his own shoulders. "If," said Wolsey, "your majesty will countenance me with your authority, I will take all care and charge upon myself;" "which idea," we are told, "the King liked well." But God gives to all their appointed work; and he who would persuade us to shift our responsibility on others is surely no true friend, but a false flatterer. There can be but little doubt that Wolsey had a selfish end in view, when by such means he contrived to win his sovereign's favour; yet it would be unjust to say that his only aim was to raise himself into power. That he was most ambitious and eagerly courted popularity there can be no doubt; but, at the same time, his devotion to Henry was deep and sincere, for even to the last, when the fickle king cast him off, Wolsey still persisted in clinging to him with all the constancy of his affectionate nature. Now, however, Henry considered no post too honourable for his favourite. In one short year Wolsey was presented to two bishoprics, and was finally installed Archbishop of York. Yet even then his uncontrollable ambition refused to be satisfied. He stood, it is true, on a level with the highest ecclesiastics of the land, but not above them; and he determined never to rest content until he had secured a post which would make him supreme in the Church, and so compel all to bow to his authority. Before long Wolsey contrived to obtain from the Pope the cardinal's hat, and shortly afterwards was created Papal legate.

Leaving Wolsey at the very pinnacle of greatness and prosperity, let us turn for a time to other matters. On the death of Prince Arthur, the eldest son of Henry VII., his widow, the Princess Catharine of Arragon, had been betrothed to his brother Henry; for his avaricious father, anxious to avoid parting with the Princess's dower, had readily acquiesced in this doubtful match. But Henry VII.'s conscience reproached him on his death-bed, and he begged his son to break off the contract. But it was too late. Henry had persuaded himself that he was really attached to the princess, and so determined at all hazards to marry her, although she had been his brother's wife. Archbishop Warham strongly objected to the match, and begged the King to abide by his father's advice. But Henry, who never allowed his will to be thwarted, refused to listen to the Primate, and having procured a special dispensation from Pope Julius, soon after wedded the Princess. It was a comparatively unimportant event; but we shall see by-and-by what momentous consequences both to church and state were involved

in it. Archbishop Warham, though naturally of a retiring, unambitious disposition, was not slow to come forward when the country required his services. Stow informs us that, in a parliament held in the year 1512, Chancellor Warham made a lengthy speech, or "clerkly proposition," as that writer terms it, which appears to have fully impressed his hearers, although I should doubt whether they sustained their attention to the end. For a full hour and a half the energetic speaker stood on his legs, declaring, "how justice should be administered, and peace be nourished, which he approved by examples from the Old and New Testament in right sufficient wise to the great commendation and singular comfort of the hearers."*

About this time an event of considerable importance occurred in the history of our Church, which I will narrate as briefly as possible. You remember how, on several occasions, attempts had been made to do away with the law by which the clergy (that is, all who were in any way connected with the sacred ministry) were exempted from judgment in the secular courts. What might in Archbishop Becket's time have been advisable had now become without doubt a crying evil. The reckless prodigality and dissolute lives of many of the clergy had, by this time, fully roused public indignation; and the people were clamorous for a law to be passed by which priests and the minor clergy guilty of heinous crimes might be punished as they deserved. The justice of such an argument was fully admitted, and the question was accordingly brought forward for debate. But the clergy, as you may imagine, were by no means willing to concede the point. At a parliament held in the year 1515, a fierce struggle ensued. It appears that the Abbot of Winchelcomb had preached a violent sermon at St. Paul's Cross, declaring that the new bill was directly contrary to God's law, and utterly subversive of the liberties of the Church. Well would it have been for the monks had they manfully consented to face and own the evil, instead of blinding their eyes to the real state of the case. The King, who was always ready to listen to and to join in any theological debate, determined to have the case argued in his presence. Accordingly the two parties met at Blackfriars. I should weary you were I to go through all the details of this important case; I will only say that Henry Standish, a priest and warden of the Mendicant Friars in London, highly approved of the proposed new law, and, like a wise man and a patriot, defended it, because he believed it would conduce to the general good, and therefore that parliament ought to pass it. Dr. Standish, without doubt, got

* Stow's Annals.

the best of the argument; but while the matter was yet pending, a circumstance occurred which tended greatly to strengthen the feeling against the clergy, and to prepare the way for Henry's resolute and tyrannical measures. John Hunn, an honest London citizen, had incurred the heavy displeasure of Dr. Horsey, Chancellor of the Bishop of London. Whether he was clearly in fault or no I cannot say, but having been suspected of heresy, he was conveyed to the Tower of London. One night, the unfortunate man was found suspended by the neck, and quite dead—murdered, it was said, by the instigation of the priests. Very little was required to fan the spark into a flame. The indignant populace warmly sympathized with the supposed martyr, and cried loudly for vengeance on Dr. Horsey, who they declared had been guilty of the foul murder. When most men believed the horrible tale, it is a relief to find that the Christian-minded Sir Thomas More refused to give credit to it. The case, nevertheless, is involved in extreme mystery; the real facts can only be known at the last great day of account. Whether true or not, the people refused to accept Dr. Horsey's account of the matter; and so Dr. Standish found that the cause he had so ably supported became daily more and more popular. Henry, who already began to show that he intended both clergy and laity should bow to his iron sway, finding the matter still remained in abeyance, ordered a large body of ecclesiastics and nobles, with a number of the Commons, to meet him at Baynard's Castle. It must have been an anxious moment for these proud ecclesiastics, who, in the resolute conduct of the King, may have read their future humiliation.

The Cardinal, with his tall, erect form, headed the party. He rose to speak first, for all knew how great was his influence over the fickle, passionate sovereign. Like Thomas à Becket, Wolsey was determined to struggle for the liberties of the Church. But times were altogether changed since then. Henry VIII. did not stand comparatively alone, as Henry II. had done, but was supported by the powerful sympathies of the nation. Rising with dignity, the Cardinal knelt before the King. He well knew Henry's wayward mood, and his words were framed with his usual tact. "My lord," he said, "none of your faithful clergy have any intention to disoblige the royal prerogative. As for me, I owe all my promotion to your highness's favour, and therefore will never consent to anything that can lessen the rights of the crown. Yet I am bound boldly to maintain that this business of conventing '*clerks*'* *before temporal judges* is, in the opinion of the clergy, directly

* Clergy.

contrary to the laws of God and the liberties of Holy Church. Both myself and the rest of the prelates are bound by our oaths to maintain the exemption; I therefore entreat your Majesty," he said, with renewed energy, "to refer the decision of this point to the Pope and conclave."

Henry was evidently in one of his stern, unyielding moods. Not even the persuasive manners of his favoured friend could move him from his purpose. His reply was short and decisive. "I consider, Cardinal, that Dr. Standish and others of his spiritual council have given the clergy a sufficient answer." "Sir," hastily interrupted the zealous Fox, Bishop of Winchester, "I warrant ye, Dr. Standish will not abide by his opinion at his peril." "Eh, marry!" said the Doctor, "what shall one poor friar do alone against all the bishops and clergy of England?" But what one poor friar failed to do, the resolute monarch accomplished. He had summoned the clergy together, and he was determined to humble them. The gentle Warham, who, though he cared but little for his own dignity, was jealous for the honour of his Church, then spoke. "My lord," he said, "I would have you remember that, in ancient times, several holy fathers of the Church opposed the common law in this matter; yea, some have even carried the contest so far as to suffer martyrdom in the cause." Such a remark had little weight with Henry, who had no sympathy to bestow on such martyrs; and without heeding the Primate's mild remark, he hastily rose and thundered forth words which must have amazed and confounded the proud prelates who stood before him, so new and startling were they. "By the providence and permission of God," he exclaimed, "we are King of England, in which realm our predecessors have never owned any superior but God. Therefore I would have ye take notice that we are resolved to maintain the rights of our crown and temporal jurisdiction in as ample a manner as any of our progenitors, and that with respect to the case in question. Therefore ye must not expect that we shall gratify your request in this matter."* The crestfallen bishops retired from the King's presence ill at ease. A great and important battle had been fought. Single-handed, a monarch had dared to defy the whole body of his clergy, and had triumphed; while the ecclesiastical power had received a blow from which it never again recovered.

* Collier, vol. iv., p. 18.

CHAPTER LI.

HENRY VIII. *continued.*—1515 to 1528.

WOLSEY'S ARROGANCE—HE ASSUMES REGAL STATE—ARCHBISHOP WARHAM RESIGNS HIS CHANCELLORSHIP—HE ENDEAVOURS TO OPEN HENRY'S EYES TO WOLSEY'S AMBITIOUS DESIGNS—HENRY SENDS WARHAM TO REMONSTRATE WITH HIS FAVOURITE—THE PRIMATE SUFFERS FROM WOLSEY'S ARROGANCE—WARHAM'S FORBEARING BEHAVIOUR—EXCUSES TO BE MADE FOR THE CARDINAL—HIS AFFECTION FOR HENRY—HE IS CREATED LORD CHANCELLOR BY THE KING—HE PERFORMS THE DUTIES OF HIS OFFICE VIGOROUSLY AND CONSCIENTIOUSLY—WOLSEY SUPPRESSES FORTY SMALL MONASTERIES, IN ORDER TO ENDOW COLLEGES AT OXFORD AND IPSWICH—HIS CONDUCT DEFENDED—HE BEGINS TO LOSE HIS INFLUENCE AT COURT—HENRY ENTERTAINS SCRUPLES REGARDING THE LAWFULNESS OF HIS MARRIAGE WITH HIS BROTHER'S WIFE—HIS PASSION FOR ANN BOLEYN—WOLSEY ENTREATS THE KING TO GIVE UP HIS DESIGN—HENRY REFUSES TO LISTEN TO WOLSEY'S REPRESENTATIONS, AND SO THE CARDINAL DETERMINES TO EMPLOY ALL HIS ENERGIES IN FURTHERING THE KING'S WISHES—HE PERSUADES HENRY TO ASK THE OPINION OF HIS PRELATES WITH RESPECT TO HIS DIVORCE—THEY ALL DECIDE IN FAVOUR OF IT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF FISHER, BISHOP OF ROCHESTER—POPE CLEMENT REFUSES TO GIVE A DECISIVE ANSWER—HENRY BEGINS TO SUSPECT THE CARDINAL OF LUKEWARMNESS IN HIS CAUSE—ANN BOLEYN'S HATRED OF WOLSEY—SHE PREJUDICES HER ROYAL LOVER AGAINST HIM.

At the close of our last chapter, we left Wolsey, if you remember, at the very summit of worldly prosperity and glory. To the mortification and annoyance of the great men of the land, he assumed almost regal state. "His ambition," says Holinshed, "was no less discernible to the eyes of the people, than the sun in the firmament on a clear and cloudless summer day; which procured him the more hatred among the noble and popular sort." The splendour of the Legate's court vied even with that of the King. His servitors were among the noblest of the land; while his palaces were adorned with every luxury that art could invent or ingenuity contrive. On solemn occasions, we are told, Wolsey had two large crosses of silver borne before him, that all might be reminded that he combined in himself the offices of archbishop and legate. That these sacred ensigns might be the more conspicuous in the solemn processions, he selected two of the tallest priests he could find as bearers, for the arrogant Cardinal was determined that none should doubt his authority or fail to be impressed with his dignity. The reckless Henry, who gave himself up entirely to the pleasures of his gay court, was often wont to resort, with his nobles, to the Cardinal's residence; where, we read, "such pleasures were devised for the King's delight, as could be invented or imagined."*

As soon as Wolsey became papal legate, the peace-loving

* Cavendish's Life of Wolsey.

Archbishop Warham, "finding that the new Lord Cardinal meddled further in the office of chancellorship than he could much suffer, except he should adventure the King's displeasure, gave up his office of chancellor into the King's hands, and delivered to him the great seal."* Before taking this step, however, Warham determined to speak out his mind. Though of a gentle nature, he was by no means wanting in moral courage. He went straight to the King, and although he knew the high favour in which the Cardinal stood at court, he determined to make an attempt to open Henry's eyes to his favourite's ambitious designs. It must be owned, Henry dealt honestly in the matter, and was not offended at the Primate's friendly hint. "Marry!" he exclaimed, "no man is so blind anywhere as in his own house. I should surely never have heard of this matter but by you. I pray you, therefore, father, go to Wolsey, and tell him, if anything be amiss, that he may amend it." It was no pleasant task for the good Warham; but he went, and honestly remonstrated with the Cardinal on his unseemly conduct. Those who give good advice are seldom thanked for their pains; and it was a long time before Wolsey forgot or forgave what he considered an unwarrantable liberty. But Warham was determined not to be discouraged. Before resigning the chancellorship, he considered it his duty again to warn Henry to be on his guard against Wolsey. This time he was accompanied by Fox, Bishop of Winchester, who willingly seconded all that Warham said. Holinshed remarks, "that as good fathers of their country, the two prelates besought the King that he would not suffer any servant to exceed or pass his master; borrowing that simile out of St. John's Gospel, where our Saviour, speaking to His disciples, says to them, Verily, verily I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his master." Henry appears, however, to have missed the point of their argument, as he failed to apply the words to the Cardinal; but with characteristic determination he answered, "Yea, forsooth, I will take good heed that all my servants shall diligently obey and not command." Warham had himself suffered from Wolsey's pride. Shortly after the Cardinal was made legate, the Primate had occasion to send Wolsey a letter, and, as a matter of course, subscribed it in his usual familiar style, "Your brother William of Canterbury." The arrogant Cardinal, however, was by no means satisfied, and resented the friendly salutation as an affront. "He was as much offended," says Holinshed, "as if the Archbishop had done him some great injury; he could by no means temper his mood, but *exclaimed*, in high displeasure, I will so work in a while, that

* Holinshed.

this man shall soon understand how I am his superior, and not his brother." The astonished messenger carried back to the Primate Wolsey's angry exclamation. Jealous for his master's honour, he began indignantly to inveigh against the Cardinal's haughty conduct. "Peace, peace," mildly interrupted the forbearing Warham; "knowest thou not that this man hath become mad with too much joy?" It is true that Wolsey's conduct was highly culpable; yet, before we condemn him, we shall do well to bear in mind the temptations that assailed him. So powerful were they, that no one but a man of the highest principles could have resisted them. Suddenly raised from a mean station to the most exalted position; in high favour with a popular and powerful king, who loaded his favourite with every possible dignity; receiving flattery and deference from those beneath him, and honour from all, can we wonder that he became intoxicated, and yielded to the snare which the devil prepares for all those who trust in their own strength?

But there are points in Wolsey's character which we cannot fail to admire. As I have before remarked, his constancy and affection for his fickle master prove the real sincerity of his heart; and although it is true he looked after his own interests, he was not unmindful of his country.

You will not be surprised to hear that as soon as Warham resigned the chancellorship, it was bestowed on Wolsey, who vigorously set himself to do the work that now devolved upon him. Although the influence of this remarkable man may have had an unfavourable effect on the character of the King himself, it is only just to acknowledge that the prosperity which the country enjoyed during the early part of Henry's reign was certainly due to the Cardinal's management.

Wolsey was too true a statesman to be insensible to the condition of the Church; and he determined if possible to do something towards reforming her abuses. With the exception of his own biographer, Cavendish, Wolsey has received little quarter from the writers of his own day, who appear to have cordially hated their haughty fellow-countryman. Among other things, he has been bitterly censured for having dissolved forty small monasteries, the property of which he transferred to the two colleges he had founded, the one at Oxford, and the other at Ipswich, his native town. Had Wolsey (as his royal master afterwards did) appropriated to himself the property of these monasteries, no words of censure would be too strong for him. But although some may disapprove of the means employed to raise the money, all must own it was bestowed on furthering a *good and useful work*. Besides, if we condemn Wolsey for this,

we must in common honesty involve in the same condemnation the wise and pious prelates, William of Waynflete and Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who, you will remember, bestowed on the colleges they had founded the property of certain religious houses, which Pope Innocent VIII. had himself suppressed. We must bear in mind also, that Wolsey had obtained the Pope's sanction for what he did, and was only acting in accordance with the spirit of the age, when he considered that such sanction was all that was needed.

I must now relate, as briefly as possible, the story of Wolsey's sudden degradation and fall. You will already have been interested at learning that what I have been telling you about Wolsey is taken from an account written by one of his most intimate friends. Cavendish was the Cardinal's faithful attendant, and a member of his household. He remained with his master when all his other servants forsook him, and has carefully noted down all that occurred during the last eventful years of Wolsey's life. You can well understand that a man in the Cardinal's position would have many bitter enemies at court; men whom he had mortally offended by his haughty and overbearing conduct, and who only waited for a fitting opportunity to compass his overthrow. Unhappily, Henry, though wayward and perverse in the extreme, was at all times singularly open to flattery. Any man who chose to exalt his abilities, and humour his whims, could at once gain a hold over him, although one inadvertent word or act might suddenly expose the flatterer to the vengeance of the passionate and fickle monarch. Wolsey's haughtiness as legate had by this time well-nigh exhausted the patience of his fellow-clergy. Loud complaints reached the King's ears. Among other things, Wolsey considered it his duty, as papal nuncio, to visit the different monasteries and correct abuses. This was but reasonable; but it appears he travelled with such a numerous and stately retinue that his visits were anything but welcome to the monks, who, although, out of respect for his holiness, might have tolerated the Cardinal himself, were by no means disposed to extend their liberality to his followers. Henry was at length greatly irritated, and wrote a menacing letter to his favourite. Wolsey knew well the inconsistent character of the King. He saw the danger, and, with his usual tact, contrived to avert it. He tendered his submission in the most abject manner, promised to amend his ways, and finally mollified his irate master by informing him that he had made his will, and had left the bulk of his *property* to the crown. For a time Henry was satisfied; but *the storm* was gathering which before long burst with all its fury *on the head* of the luckless court favourite.

It was about the year 1527 that Henry first began to have scruples with regard to the lawfulness of his marriage with his brother's wife. That some one insinuated the thought into the King's mind, there can be no doubt. Wolsey has been freely accused of this by the writers of his own time; but I believe him to have been wholly innocent of such a charge. As for Henry, little can be urged in defence of his conduct. In the first instance, he may have recalled his father's injunctions, and may really have doubted the lawfulness of his marriage with Catharine; but it is clear that afterwards his unholy affection for Ann Boleyn was the real motive which induced him to sue for a divorce. For even had Henry conscientiously believed his marriage to be illegal, he had no right to consider himself at liberty to marry another, and plan it even before the first tie was dissolved. It was some time before the nation became aware of the King's designs; but Wolsey had already been admitted into his confidence. When Henry first informed the Cardinal of his guilty passion for the fair Ann, Wolsey was horrified and astonished. He threw himself on his knees, and with all his earnestness begged the King to subdue his passion, but without effect.* Unhappily, Wolsey's moral courage and sense of right could seldom endure the test of temptation. He allowed his deep affection for Henry to stand in the way of his duty to God; and rather than forfeit the favour of his sovereign he contrived to persuade himself that he was really acting from conscientious motives, when he threw himself into the King's scheme. As for Henry, he had no real religious principle to guide him. Everything, truth, honour, justice, all were in turn made to give place to his selfish gratifications and sinful pleasures. Yet I would have you understand that because a man of strong passions is occasionally mastered by them, and falls into sin, he is not necessarily "a bad man;" for he may hate his sin and strive by God's help earnestly to repent of it, as David did. But he who, like Henry, allows his passions to gain entire mastery over him, and makes little or no resistance, becomes at last the servant of the devil, although at baptism he was made the child of God. "It is wonderful," remarks Cavendish, who lived to witness the effects of the King's divorce, "to see the strength of princes' wills when they are bent to have their pleasure fulfilled. Through the King's guilty passion, what inventions were furnished, what costly edifices of noble and ancient monasteries were overthrown, what diversities of opinion then arose: what extortions were then committed; how many learned and good men were put to death; what alterations of good ancient laws, customs, and charitable foundations were

* Cavendish.

turned from the relief of the poor to the utter destruction and desolation, almost to the subversion of this noble realm."

The Cardinal, therefore, finding Henry was not to be moved from his purpose, determined not only to countenance the divorce, but to employ all his energies in furthering his royal master's designs.

But the task Wolsey had undertaken was no easy one, and it proved his ruin. Unwilling to take the whole responsibility on his own shoulders, he persuaded Henry to lay the case before his prelates, and demand of them a decisive opinion. The Primate and all the Bishops, with the exception of Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, declared their belief that Henry's marriage with Catharine of Arragon was unlawful, although the Pope had granted his dispensation. When the matter was debated, Fisher bravely stood up, and refused to set his signature to the paper signed by the rest. "God willing, my hand and seal," he boldly exclaimed, "shall never be set to such an instrument. The Lord hath spoken truth, 'What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.'" Henry never forgave this most unseasonable interference with his wishes; and the noble, though, we may think, mistaken Bishop afterwards paid the penalty of his honesty with his life.

But a still greater and more insuperable difficulty stood in Henry's way. He still declared himself a loyal son of the Pope, and it was, therefore, absolutely necessary that his holiness's sanction to the divorce should be obtained. It must be owned that Pope Clement VII. was in a very awkward predicament. To offend and estrange a powerful sovereign like Henry, by refusing to countenance his divorce, would greatly hinder his own ambitious schemes. At the same time, he was well aware that to sanction the King's rejection of Catharine would draw down upon him the heavy wrath of Charles V., the powerful Emperor of Germany, who was the Queen's nephew. In order to extricate himself from this dilemma, he craftily contrived to delude Henry with fair promises, and yet never satisfied him by sending a decisive answer. The matter had been entrusted to Wolsey, who, it must be owned, did his utmost to induce the Pope to send a favourable reply to his master. For himself, as a loyal and consistent servant of the Roman Pontiff, he dared not openly give his opinion in favour of the divorce until the Pope had expressed his mind. But Henry, whose passions gained strength by delay, was in no mood to reason calmly on the matter. Irritated and annoyed, he began to suspect the Cardinal's fidelity, and taxed him with want of zeal in his cause. Wolsey honestly defended himself. "My lord," he said, "my

commission, as Papal Legate, gives me no authority to proceed to judgment without the knowledge of his holiness, who hath reserved the same to himself." Possibly this really consistent reply might have satisfied Henry, had his real affection for his favourite been allowed to work; but the luckless Cardinal had an enemy at court, whose wiles Henry had no power to withstand. The beauteous Ann Boleyn, enraged at this unwelcome hindrance to her brilliant prospects, hated the Legate, and lost no opportunity of maligning him to her royal lover. "I perceive, sweetheart," said Henry, "that ye are none of my Lord Cardinal's friends." "Why, sire," was the instant and spiteful rejoinder, "I have no cause, nor any that love you; no more hath your grace, if you did well consider his indirect and unlawful ways."* Henry returned no answer; but the words rankled in his breast; and when the Cardinal next saw his royal master the King's lowering brow and half-averted look proclaimed too truly that the court favourite's brief period of glory and honour was on the wane.

* Cavendish.

CHAPTER LII.

HENRY VIII. *continued.*—1528 to 1530.

WOLSEY'S ENERGY IN THE KING'S MATTER—HE WRITES TO THE POPE, TO URGE HIM TO SEND THE KING A FAVOURABLE REPLY—HENRY ENTERTAINS THE IDEA OF REJECTING THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE—PERSEVERING CONDUCT OF THE CARDINAL—HIS UNJUST TREATMENT—HENRY LISTENS TO THE FALSE INSINUATIONS AGAINST HIM, AND HE LOSES HIS FAVOUR AT COURT—WOLSEY'S UNTIRING ENERGY IN HENRY'S CAUSE—UNREASONABLE CONDUCT OF THE KING—HE HUMBLER WOLSEY, WHO IS COMPELLED TO LEAVE HIS PALACE AT YORK PLACE AND RETIRE TO ESHER—MISERABLE CONDITION OF THE CARDINAL'S HOUSEHOLD—HIS SOLICITUDE FOR HIS ATTENDANTS—HIS FAREWELL SPEECH TO THEM—WOLSEY IS ARRAIGNED FOR HIGH TREASON, AND ACCUSED OF VIOLATING THE ACT OF PROVISORS—INJUSTICE OF THE ACCUSATION—WOLSEY'S SUDDEN ILLNESS—THE KING RELENTS, AND SENDS HIS OWN PHYSICIAN TO THE CARDINAL, WITH A KIND MESSAGE—WOLSEY RECOVERS—HIS ENEMIES ARE AGAIN ACTIVE IN PREJUDICING THE KING AGAINST HIM—HE IS ORDERED TO RESIDE AT HIS DIOCESE IN THE NORTH—WOLSEY PROFITS BY ADVERSITY—HIS CHARITY TO THE POOR—ARRANGEMENT FOR HIS INSTALLATION—HIS HUMBLE BEHAVIOUR—HE REFUSES TO SANCTION ANY DISPLAY—WOLSEY'S CROSS FALLS—HE INTERPRETS THIS AS AN EVIL OMEN—SUDDEN ARREST OF THE CARDINAL FOR HIGH TREASON—HIS DESPAIR AND AGONY OF MIND—GRIEF OF THE PEOPLE—THEY ASSEMBLE IN LARGE NUMBERS TO BID HIM FAREWELL—AT LEICESTER WOLSEY IS SEIZED WITH DEATH—HE IS RECEIVED INTO THE ABBEY—SIR WILLIAM KINGSTON ATTENDS HIM ON HIS DEATHBED—WOLSEY'S LAST WORDS.

WOLSEY was not slow to perceive the change that had come over his once affectionate sovereign. Full well he knew Henry's passionate and fitful nature, and he trembled for the consequences. Yet, with unabated zeal and energy, he continued to urge Pope Clement to send a favourable answer. "Ye know full well," he says in one of his letters to the Pope, "the benefit of the King's friendship to the See of Rome, that, provided ye will give his highness satisfaction in this matter, ye may depend not only on his single assistance, but he will surely make it his endeavour to draw all his allies into the same interest. Of a truth," he honestly exclaims, "I am sorely perplexed about this affair of the divorce, yet I have endeavoured to procure it with all the eeanestness imaginable; yea, if the safety of the King and kingdom, the repose of Europe, the apostolical authority, and my own life and soul lay at stake, I could not solicit with more application. I throw myself at your holiness's feet. I do beg, if you have any favourable thought of me—if you think of me as a Cardinal and an honest man; if you believe me to have any regard to justice or conscience; if you think there be any faith or reality in my professions of duty to the Apostolic

See; if you believe I have any regard for my own salvation—I do entreat you to consider my application, and answer the King's request with all expedition; for if such requests were not founded on reason and religion, I solemnly declare I would rather suffer all extremities of torture than recommend them." But though Wolsey began his letter with an humble entreaty, he knew well the power of a threat, and dexterously employed the weapons he had at command. "Should the King," he concludes, "find himself neglected by the Apostolic See, when his claim is so well supported by the laws of God and man; if he despair of friendship and consideration from Christ's Vicar; should the prospect continue thus gloomy and unfavourable, it is to be feared his highness may apply to other expedients, and draw off the English from their obedience to the See of Rome. Of a surety," he adds, "this may prove a dangerous precedent for other Christian princes to follow. I would have your holiness consider well the matter, for the time has not yet passed to prevent so fatal a mischief."* This remarkable letter proves beyond all doubt that Wolsey zealously did his utmost to further his sovereign's designs. It was clearly not in his power to dissolve the King's marriage without renouncing the Pope; and we cannot be surprised that at that time he was not prepared to take such a step. However, it is clear that Henry had already entertained the notion of renouncing the supremacy of the Pope, and that Wolsey was fully aware of this most important fact.

No effort was too great, no attempt too hopeless for the persevering Cardinal. Night and day he toiled for the thankless master who, when he no longer needed the services of those he once valued, never hesitated with heartless indifference to cast them off. Yet we must remember that the mind of Henry was weak and vain, and he was exposed to great temptation. Those who hated the Cardinal saw and eagerly seized their opportunity. The most cruel and unjust accusations were heaped on the luckless court favourite; and Henry, drinking in the flattery with which such accusations were accompanied, began to distrust and even to hate the man he had once so entirely loved. Caven-dish tells us how, on one occasion, the Duke of Suffolk, finding the King more than usually irritated by the delay, exclaimed, "Will his holiness never decide the matter? Of a truth," he added, glancing towards Wolsey, who stood by, "it was never thus in England until we had Cardinals among us." "Sir," retorted the Cardinal, his face flushing with anger, for he had once stood the Duke's friend in the hour of need, "you, of all men in this realm, have least cause to despise Cardinals; for it

* Collier.

I, poor Cardinal, had not been, you would not at this moment have had a head on your shoulders wherewith to make such a brag, in despite of us who wish you no harm; neither have you such cause to be offended with us." But Wolsey's defence fell on deaf ears. The King's passionate temper could ill brook the delay, and all his pent-up wrath fell on the unhappy man who had so long been his willing slave. But Wolsey still toiled on; and many were the wearisome interviews he was compelled to hold with his wrathful master, who on these occasions freely indulged in the coarsest abuse. Vainly did Wolsey declare he had done his utmost—had spared no pains, shrunk from no toil in his sovereign's cause. Henry refused to believe one word of what he said, and yet still meanly made use of the man he intended to crush.

One very hot day in the summer, just as the trial for the divorce was going forward, and Queen Catharine had retired to weep over her sorrow in secret, the luckless Cardinal, whose former life of luxury now made his exertions doubly severe, had employed his whole morning in hurrying to and fro with messages from the King. He had just retired to his palace, fondly hoping his labours for the day were over; but he soon found, to his cost, that they had but begun. A messenger arrived from the King commanding his instant attendance. The weary Cardinal reluctantly rose from his couch, and, accompanied by the Bishop of Carlisle, hastened in no very amiable mood to the royal palace. For several hours the Bishop waited in the barge for the Cardinal, who still lingered. At length the door was thrown open, and Wolsey issued forth; but his flushed cheeks and hurried manner revealed too truly the nature of the trial through which he had just passed. A long and awkward silence followed the Cardinal's return to the barge. At length the Bishop ventured a remark. Like most men, who, when they feel they must be very careful in their choice of a subject, resort, in their difficulty, to a remark on the weather, the Bishop, in a faltering voice, said, "It is a very hot day, Cardinal; is it not?" "Hot!" retorted the Cardinal, with an impatient gesture, "yea, hot indeed; if you had been as well chafed as I have been within the last hour or two, ye would say ye were hot!" The Bishop's speech was a well-meaning, but unfortunate one; he therefore made no further attempt to renew the conversation, while Wolsey, burying his face in his hands, relapsed into a gloomy silence; and so the two returned to the palace. The sultry summer's day was now fast closing in, and Wolsey thankfully retired to rest. Suddenly he was awoke from sleep by a loud knocking at the door. The Earl of Wiltshire entered, and

stood by the Cardinal's bedside. His appearance was most unwelcome. "I have come hither," he said, "at his Majesty's command. He would have you, Lord Cardinal, go at once with all speed to the Queen, and persuade her to yield the point, and consent to the divorce." Exhausted as Wolsey was by the heat and agitation of the day's business, he dared not refuse, and rose to go at once on his difficult and thankless errand. We can well excuse the hasty words he uttered, for we must own he was sorely tried. "A plague take you, my lord," he said, scowling at the earl, "and others of the Council, who have put such fancies into the head of the King; marry, ye do verily trouble all the realm; but, mark my words, at the end ye will get small thanks either from God or the world."* Muttering his complaints, the Cardinal slowly went about the King's business, heartily wishing himself out of the whole thing, and longing for that peace which, in his exalted position, it was useless to sigh for. The once haughty and ambitious Cardinal would now have thankfully exchanged places with the humblest citizen in the kingdom. But his downfall was close at hand. Henry had ceased to regard Wolsey with any favour, and now eagerly listened to the base accusations of those who had planned the Cardinal's ruin. The royal mandate went forth. Wolsey received notice from the King to deliver up the broad seal, which he had received as Lord Chancellor, to quit his stately palace of York Place, and retire to Esher, a palace in the diocese of Winchester. In vain Wolsey protested his innocence; in vain he sent the costliest gifts to his master. Henry's favour was not to be recovered; and the fallen favourite had only to submit. Bitterly did he now repent having staked all his happiness on the passing favour of a fickle King, instead of fixing his affections on that God who has so faithfully sworn never to fail those who put their trust in Him. The proud Cardinal had, in his prosperity, never learnt this lesson; and so God humbled him, that he might kneel at the foot of the cross, and own his weakness, his sinfulness, his utter nothingness. How must those words which we still hear so often chanted in the service of the church, have come home to the heart of the rejected court favourite, as, in his hour of need, he knelt for consolation in God's house: "O! put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man, for there is no help in them." "It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any confidence in princes; for blessed is he who hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God."

The account Cavendish gives us of the Cardinal's brief

* Cavendish.

sojourn at Esher is full of sad interest. Henry was determined that Wolsey should feel the full force of his displeasure. In his dreary retirement every comfort was taken from him. Cavendish tells us that "even the bare necessities of life were withdrawn." "My Lord and his people," remarks the faithful servitor, "had no beds, sheets, tablecloths, or dishes to eat their meat in, or wherewith to buy any, although there was good store of victuals, beer, and wine; my lord was forced to borrow some plates and dishes of the Bishop of Carlisle," who it appears preferred braving the King's wrath rather than desert an old friend in his need.

At this period of Wolsey's history, one is struck with the wondrous contrast between his former haughty, arrogant demeanour, and his self-abasement, humility, and gentle submission to God's will. In his retirement at Esher, he was not so wholly absorbed in his own grief as to be unmindful of others. One cannot dwell without satisfaction on the thoughtfulness he displayed for those attendants who afterwards so heartlessly deserted him. Soon after his arrival at Esher, Wolsey called all his servants before him. They must have been struck with the change that had come over their master; his once erect and haughty figure was bent and trembling, while his quivering lip and halting utterance proclaimed too truly the severe struggle through which he had passed. "Most faithful, gentle, and true-hearted yeomen," he said, as the hot tears flowed down his cheeks, "I do much lament, that in my prosperity I did not so much for you as I ought to have done, and was in my power to do. In my prosperity I should have preferred you to the King. Then I knew full well," he bitterly exclaimed, "I should have incurred the severe displeasure of the King's servants, who would not have spared to report behind my back that there could no office in the court escape the Cardinal and his friends, and by that means I should have run into open slander of all the world; and now," he mournfully added, "it hath come to pass that it hath pleased the King to take all that I have into his hands; so that I have now nothing to give you, for I have nothing remaining to me but the bare clothes on my back." "Then," says Cavendish, "he gave them his hearty thanks, and turned slowly away."

The fallen Cardinal, stripped of his vast fortune by the pitiless master he had so faithfully served, was now arraigned for high treason. That Wolsey had been guilty of many foolish, nay, even sinful acts, cannot be denied; yet the accusations brought against him at this time were many of them so weak that we may well conceive them to have been prompted

by the animosity of his enemies. It is to be observed that few charges were brought against Wolsey during the days of his prosperity; but as soon as the King's face is averted, he is accused of every species of enormity. Among other things, it was urged that he had not observed the Act of Provisors, which, you remember, forbade any English bishop to receive a Papal bull without the royal licence. But a law may be passed, and yet not enforced in every instance. I have shown you how often this wise enactment was evaded. When, therefore, Wolsey became Papal Legate, and promised to uphold the Pontiff's authority, he was only doing what numbers had done before him. He was acting, it is true, in a strict sense, *illegally*, yet according to *custom*, and with the full sanction of the King and government. Meanwhile this sudden agitation and prolonged anxiety began to tell on Wolsey. He fell violently sick, and for some days lay in imminent danger. Whether Henry was at this time left to himself, and so his better feelings began to struggle for the mastery, I know not; but for a brief space all his old love for his friend returned. With that strange perverseness which usually characterises a weak and passionate mind, he began to relent towards the persecuted man, who now lay at the point of death. A messenger from the royal palace was despatched with all haste to Dr. Butts, the King's own physician, who was commanded instantly to visit the sick man. On his return he was ushered into Henry's presence, who eagerly inquired after the Cardinal's health. "Have you seen yonder man?" he said to the Doctor. "I have, sire," was the rejoinder. "How like you him?" anxiously inquired the King. "Sire," boldly answered the physician, "I warrant ye he will be dead within four days if he receive no comfort from you shortly." "Marry, God forbid that he should die!" quoth the King. "I would not lose him for twenty thousand pounds. I pray you go to him, and do your care for him." "Then must your grace," retorted the honest doctor, "send him some comfortable message." "So I will," said Henry; "therefore, make speed to him again; and you shall deliver this ring from me for a token." So saying, Henry drew from his finger a signet-ring, which bore on it his own image. It was one of those costly gifts which, in the days of his prosperity, Wolsey had so freely bestowed on his royal master. "This ring," continued Henry, "he knoweth well, for he gave it me himself. Tell him I am not offended at him in my heart for anything; and that shall he know shortly; therefore, bid him pluck up his heart, and be of good comfort. And I charge you," said Henry, *with increased earnestness*, "come not from him until you have

brought him out of the danger of death, if it be possible.”* Gladly the good physician sped on his charitable errand. When Wolsey received the token, his heart revived within him, and rejoicing in the King’s good-will, he quickly regained his strength. But he was trusting only to a broken reed. The Cardinal’s enemies, finding that Henry was really beginning to relent towards his favourite, redoubled their efforts to bring him again to his former mind; and it was not long before they succeeded. An order came from the King, commanding the Cardinal at once to quit Esher, and go into the North. It was all that Wolsey’s enemies desired. They were well aware of the power which his attractive, winning manner exercised over his master, and they rightly believed that his presence would more than counteract all their insinuations. Such conduct was mean and contemptible in the extreme, and our sympathy leans with the injured though erring victim of it. With a heavy heart Wolsey prepared to obey the royal mandate. “Methinks,” exclaimed the Duke of Norfolk, who was one of Wolsey’s bitterest enemies, “the Cardinal makes no haste to go northwards. Tell him,” he fiercely added, turning towards Cromwell, Wolsey’s friend, “if he go not away, I will tear him with my teeth; therefore, I would advise him to repair away with all speed, or else I will set him forwards.”

It is pleasant to dwell on the closing scene of this great man’s life. Adversity chastened and purified Wolsey’s character, and many virtues appear which hitherto had been hidden by his overweening arrogance. During the brief period Wolsey had regained favour at Court, the King had bestowed on him a considerable sum of money. All this he now spent in deeds of charity; for he determined by acts of self-denial and humility to mortify the pride of his heart. Cavendish tells us that on his arrival in Yorkshire, the Cardinal set himself in earnest to do the work of his diocese. “Most commonly, every Sunday, if the weather served, he would go to some poor parish church thereabouts, and then would say the Divine service, and cause one of his chaplains to preach the word of God to the people; afterwards he would dine in some honest house in the town, where should be distributed to the poor alms, as well as meat and drink.” Such conduct soon won the people’s hearts. He had much honour and love, writes Cavendish, from all men, high and low; and the people soon became eager for his installation into the old Minster at York, which ceremony had *not yet* been performed. The account which Cavendish gives *us of the Cardinal’s behaviour on this occasion shows us that he*

* Cavendish.

had become indeed an altered man. He consented with reluctance to the ceremony; but when he found his people were about to honour him, by preparing everything in the most costly style, he strongly objected to what he considered a needless display, sending word to Cavendish that he only wanted things "simply decent." Even the covering which it was the custom to place beneath the Archbishop's feet on such solemn occasions Wolsey would fain have dispensed with. "My predecessors, it is true," he said, "have gone on cloth; but we intend to go on foot, without any such pomp or glory, in the vamps of our hosen." He therefore gave orders to his servants, says Cavendish, to go as humbly thither as might be, without any sumptuous apparel. But while the preparations for the installation were going forward, an event occurred which for ever put an end to all Wolsey's hopes.

On the festival of All Saints, 1529, Wolsey was sitting at table, surrounded by his friends. The massive cross which had so often on solemn occasions been borne before him rested against the oak panneling at the side of the hall. Dr. Bonner, who was present, rose. As he passed along, the cross slid from its position, and fell heavily on his head, inflicting a rather severe wound. Wolsey started from his seat. To those present, there seemed nothing remarkable in such an occurrence; but to Wolsey it was an omen of dark and fearful import. "Hath it drawn blood?" asked the Cardinal, with quivering lip. "It hath, my lord," was the instant reply of an attendant. "Unhappy omen; unhappy omen!" murmured Wolsey, as he rose and left the hall, vainly endeavouring to stifle his violent agitation. Not many hours afterwards, Sir William Walsh arrived from the King, with orders to arrest the Cardinal for high treason. It was a crushing and unlooked-for blow, and it fell like a thunderbolt on the heart of Wolsey. With all the warm affection of his generous nature he had clung to Henry, although despised and cast off; and this last cruel wrench broke his heart. It was his death-blow. For a brief space, grief well-nigh overwhelmed the once haughty man. He wept like a child. He covered his face with his hands. His whole form shook with the violent agitation that mastered him. The faithful Cavendish, deeply moved at the sight, tried in vain to inspire his master with hope, and to comfort his wounded heart. Wolsey rose. Possibly during those few brief moments he had gone for strength to that Saviour who has promised to cast out none that come to Him; for when he spoke his words and manner were calmer, and his countenance *more resigned*. "My faithful friend," he said, extending his

hand to Cavendish, "alas! I am grieved that I have nothing wherewith to reward you, and all my true and faithful servants, for the good service ye have done me; for this I do much lament." The news of the Cardinal's arrest spread like fire through the city. Wolsey had gained the hearts of the poor and lowly by his gentle kindness and benevolent deeds. Cavendish tells us that three thousand people assembled at the gates to bid him farewell. As he passed through the gateway, they pressed forward, eager to obtain a last sight of their benefactor. The cry of sympathy which arose from that vast crowd must have fallen like healing balm on the heart of the crushed and despised prelate. "God save your grace! God save your grace! the foul evil take them that have taken you from us; we pray God that vengeance may light upon them." But Wolsey's life was fast ebbing away. It was with great difficulty that he could sit on his mule; and when he reached Leicester he was able to proceed no further. The gates of the friendly abbey, which had sheltered many a sick and wayworn man, were thrown wide open, and the venerable abbot with tender solicitude bore the dying prelate to his couch. "Father abbot," murmured Wolsey, "I am come to lay my bones among ye."

The next day Wolsey grew weaker. Sir William Kingston, Constable of the Tower, who was sent by the King, stood by the Cardinal's bedside, and received his parting words. The knight bade him "good-morrow," and asked him "how he did?" "Sir," said Wolsey, "I wait but God's pleasure to render up my poor soul to Him." Then, after a brief pause, he said: "I pray you, have me heartily commended to his royal Majesty, and beseech him on my behalf to call to his princely remembrance all matters that have been between us from the beginning, and especially between good Queen Catharine and him; and then shall his grace's conscience know whether I have offended him or not; he is a prince of most royal carriage, and hath a princely heart. I do assure ye," faltered the dying man, "I have many a time kneeled before him three hours together, to persuade him to give up his will and appetite, but could not prevail. Oh! Master Kingston," he added, with all the energy which his failing strength would permit, "had I but served my God as diligently as I have served my king, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs; but this is the just reward I must receive for my diligent pains and study, not regarding my service to my God, but only to my prince. Master Kingston," he murmured, as the knight reverently bent down to catch his parting words, "farewell! I wish all things may have good success; my time draws on; I may not tarry with you; I do

pray you, remember my words ; fare thee well !”* The great spirit had passed away for ever ; to find, let us hope, peace in the arms of that heavenly King who is more merciful than any earthly sovereign.

Although none can deny that Wolsey had many serious failings, I think we must own the justice of the following words of his faithful servitor. “The Cardinal,” writes Cavendish, “was my lord and master, whom in his lifetime I served, and so remained with him in his fall continually, during the time of all his troubles until he died. In all which time I punctually observed all his demeanour, as also all his triumphs and glorious estate. Nevertheless, whatsoever any man hath conceived of him in his life, or since his death, this much I dare say without offence of any, that to my judgment I never saw this realm in better obedience or quiet than it was in the time of his authority, nor justice better administered without partiality.”

Be this as it may, I think Wolsey was quite innocent with regard to his sovereign. Nothing proves this more than Henry’s behaviour after his death. When informed that his once valued friend was no more, he was seized with sorrow and compunction ; and, with his usual weakness and caprice, would not permit a word to be said against the Cardinal, whose memory he ever after treated with reverence and affection ; “a proof,” says a modern writer, “that humour, more than reason, or any discovery of treachery, had discovered the last persecution against him.”†

* Cavendish.

† Hume.

CHAPTER LIII.

HENRY VIII. *continued.*

DAWN OF THE REFORMATION—GENERAL DESIRE FOR A REFORM IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND—THE LOLLARDS NOT THE ONLY REFORMERS—NECESSITY OF DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES—VARIOUS REASONS WHICH HASTENED FORWARD THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND—MARTIN LUTHER—HE BOLDLY EXPOSES THE SHAMELESS SALE OF INDULGENCES, AND DENOUNCES THE WHOLE SYSTEM OF THE ROMISH CHURCH—RAPID SPREAD OF LUTHER'S OPINIONS—NUMBERS IN ENGLAND ARE READY TO SUPPORT THE GERMAN REFORMER—MARTIN LUTHER'S RELUCTANCE TO CREATE A DIVISION IN THE CHURCH—THE POPE REFUSES TO CONCILIATE THE REFORMING PARTY, AND SO BECOMES THE CAUSE OF GREAT EUROPEAN SCHISM—HENRY VIII. UNDERTAKES TO REFUTE LUTHER, AND RECEIVES FROM POPE JULIUS THE TITLE OF "DEFENDER OF THE FAITH"—HIS ARGUMENTS—REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN ENGLAND—THE GREEK LANGUAGE DILIGENTLY STUDIED, AND THE SCRIPTURES READ IN THE ORIGINAL—GOOD AND LEARNED MEN RISE, WHO, THOUGH OPPOSED TO THE TEACHING OF WICLIF IN MANY RESPECTS, DESIRE TO REFORM THE CHURCH—DEAN COLLETT—HIS PIETY AND LOVE FOR HOLY SCRIPTURE—HUGH LATIMER AND NICHOLAS RIDLEY.

IN order to make the events which I am now about to describe intelligible to you, we must retrace our steps for a time, and take a survey of the state of our English Church at the dawn of the Reformation. It is not my intention to enter fully on each stage of this great movement. My object in these pages has been to give you a history of the English Church from the earliest times, not a history only of the Reformation. This has been done by far abler pens than mine. I shall, therefore, confine myself to certain prominent facts, which I think have been in too many instances misunderstood, or wholly overlooked. So many opinions have been formed of our English Reformation, each one so utterly opposed to the other, that I feel I have undertaken no easy task in trying to give you a fair and unbiassed account of it. It will be my earnest endeavour to avoid extreme statements. I would rather prefer placing the facts plainly and openly before you, that you may form your own judgment on the subject. Let me bid you carefully remember that ever since the time of Wiclif there had been a general and growing desire, even among the highest dignitaries of the Church, for a reformation of those abuses which, by means of the Church of Rome, had found their way into the Church of England; which abuses, I would have you remember, did *not* exist in our Church in earlier and purer times. Do not forget what I have so often shown you, that the Lollards were not the only early reformers. In many modern histories of the Reformation we

read so much of these men, their earnestness and zeal, and their hatred of tyranny and superstition, that the unscriptural, extravagant opinions they taught are placed altogether out of sight. On the other hand, those good men who desired to reform the Church as much as the Lollard party, yet would fain have retained much that was scriptural and ancient in her teaching, are altogether left out of sight, or utterly misunderstood. At the time of the Reformation, these two parties appear prominently on the scene. It is deeply to be deplored that both were afterwards involved in the same persecution. Yet such a fact is a subject rather of sorrow than surprise. Moderate men too often share the condemnation of their more extreme brethren. The opinions of the Lollards were so startling and subversive of all order both to Church and State, that we cannot wonder that many really good and learned men looked with suspicion on all reformers, even moderate ones, although they may carefully have avoided the errors of Lollardy, and sanctioned only what was scriptural and primitive in it. Let us guard against the error into which our forefathers could hardly have avoided falling, and carefully distinguish between these two parties; otherwise we shall be involved in those difficulties and false notions which the enemies of the Church of England have ever been so willing to encourage. Many things contributed to bring about the Reformation in England. The tyranny and exactions of the Papal See had, from time to time, as we have seen, roused the spirit of the English nation. The peculiar doctrines of the Church of Rome, and the false teaching which she had introduced had been assailed and exposed. The monks and clergy had, many of them, by their idle, dissolute lives, lost their influence over the people; while the introduction of printing had placed the Bible and other good books in the hands of many, who were not slow to form their own conclusions on what they read. The system of Rome, her teaching and her works, could not bear the searching test. There were many moderate and learned men, who, after diligent and prayerful study of Scripture and the ancient fathers of the Church, were forced to own that her doctrines were many of them neither scriptural nor primitive.

At this juncture, when all seemed ripe for a great change, a remarkable character appears on the scene. The name of Martin Luther, the great German reformer, has become a household word among us. Luther boldly and openly proclaimed what hundreds had long secretly believed; and this will account for the marvellous rapidity with which his opinions spread. The gunpowder had all been prepared beforehand, but it was *Luther who fired the train*. Numbers were ready to support

the stout-hearted German monk, who now so boldly and fearlessly defied the authority of the Roman pontiff. All Europe was soon in an uproar, while the papal power received a shock from which it has never been able to recover. It would be quite impossible for me to enter here upon the great struggle which, you remember, ended in the total separation of a large part of Christendom from the Roman Church. It is necessary that I should confine myself to the Reformation in our own land, which, I shall show you, possessed a distinctive character of its own, and differed in many important respects from the Reformation abroad. I will only now touch upon one or two points which I cannot well omit. The honest heart of Luther had long been grieved at the shameless corruptions which the popes of Rome disregarded, and in many cases secretly encouraged. In the year 1517, Tetzel, the papal emissary, appeared in Germany. He there hawked about in the most open and shameless manner the papal indulgences. For a paltry sum persons might obtain of this reverend vendor of God's mercies entire immunity from purgatorial pains; for, as Tetzel himself asserted: "As soon as the ring of the money was heard in his basin, the soul for which it was put in would ascend out of purgatory into heaven." It is true that the Pope afterwards sternly rebuked Tetzel for his indiscreet zeal; but the mischief was done, people's eyes were opened, and they were not slow to condemn a system which could render such gross abuses possible. Tetzel's conduct roused Luther's honest indignation. He openly declared against the errors of the Roman system; and finding the Pope unwilling to give him a fair hearing, he appealed to a general council. There can be no doubt that Luther's intentions were pure and honest; and whatever errors he may afterwards have fallen into, they are all, I believe, to be laid at the Pope's door. In the first instance, Luther had no intention whatever of leaving the Church of Rome; he was eventually driven to it by the pride, arbitrary temper, and blindness of the Roman court. That court refused to purge the Church of the doctrinal errors into which she had fallen, and to reform the abuses of the papal system. Thus a favourable opportunity was allowed to pass of attaching the honest-minded German reformer to his Church's interests, and perpetual schism in Christendom was the consequence. During the latter period of the Reformation, Luther in his zeal was induced to make statements which all lovers of evangelical truth must regret.* It is clear, however, that he

* Thus he carried the doctrine of justification by faith so far as to bid the sinner "*pecca fortiter*," "*sin on boldly*;" and he called the Books of *Chronicles* and *Ecclesiastes* poor and unwise; and the Epistle of St. James

originally valued apostolic order. I will quote his words: "In the Church," he says, "God has powerfully and miraculously preserved holy baptism, moreover, in the public pulpit, on the Lord's Day, sermons are preached, the text of the Gospel is preserved, remission of sins upheld, and absolution proclaimed, as well in confession as in public. Again, the sacrament of the altar is administered to Christians twice or three times in the year, although only in one kind.* Then by a Divine miracle there remaineth in the Church the Psalter, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. Likewise, many pious and excellent hymns, which were left to posterity by truly Christian and spiritual men, though oppressed with tyranny. Wherever these truly sacred relics and the relics of holy men are to be found, there exists also the true holy Church of Christ; for all these are ordinances and fruits of Christ, except the forcible removal of one part of the sacrament from Christians. In this Church of Christ, therefore, the Spirit of Christ is certainly present, and hath preserved true knowledge and true faith in his elect."

The fame of the bold German reformer soon spread rapidly from one end of Europe to the other. The opinions he had so forcibly upheld influenced many in England, who were only waiting for an opportunity to proclaim their real views. Henry, however, at that time was in no mood to countenance freedom of opinion, and sanctioned the prosecution, both of the followers of Wiclif and Luther. Some time afterwards he also undertook to write an elaborate treatise against the German reformer. This remarkable document created a good deal of sensation, and procured for the zealous monarch the favour of Pope Julius, who styled him "Defender of the Faith." Henry, it is true, was unduly puffed up at the unbounded applause bestowed on his work; yet it cannot be denied that there is considerable merit in it. It shows that he must have bestowed a good deal of thought on the subject, and could have been by no means ignorant of the teaching of Scripture and of the Church. Unhappily, we too often imbibe the teaching of God's word without its spirit. A naturally acute man and one who is fond of argument can easily defend the different Christian doctrines and reason upon them, while all the time he may be denying them in his life. Henry's after acts too surely prove the justice of this remark. It will interest you if I quote an epistle of straw; and wished the Book of Esther were tossed into the Elbe.

* Among other modern abuses, it had become the custom in the Roman Church to withhold from the laity the cup in the Holy Eucharist, although *there is no warrant for such a custom either in Scripture or the early Church.*

one or two short passages from this remarkable treatise. They show without doubt that the royal author was duly alive to the necessity of forsaking sin and leading a godly life. The King, among other things, charged Luther with having affirmed (I fear with too much reason) that priests enjoined penance on those whom they were well aware had no intention of forsaking their sins, and that he had further declared "the people were not instructed in the necessity of reforming their manners." This, exclaims the zealous monarch, is a notorious calumny; for what priest was ever so ignorant as to enjoin penance for former "*miscarriage*,"* and at the same time give an indulgence for repetition? What priest, when he gives absolution, does not suggest those words of our blessed Saviour, "Go and sin no more"? Who does not put his penitent in mind of St. Paul's exhortation, "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness?"† What confessor is unacquainted with St. Gregory's description of repentance? To repent, says the father, is to lament our faults, and not repeat them; for he that returns to the commission of what he is sorry for, either knows nothing of repentance, or else dissembles in his compunction. Again, he accuses Luther of laying too much stress on faith or a true belief in Christ's merits, so that he altogether omits or overpowers the necessity of good works, or doing God's will on earth. "Marry, he makes us so rich in belief," quaintly remarks his majesty, "that we be perfect beggars in manners; and yet St. James tells us that 'faith without works is dead.' I believe," justly remarks Henry, "that God doth both regard our faith and our works, too, though He wants the first no more than He doth the latter." But Luther argues as if a man that believed can not possibly miscarry; and that nothing but a doubting mind can prove one's ruin. "What!" indignantly exclaims Henry, "will nothing but unbelief destroy a man for ever? Will not adultery and murder? will not perjury and parricide damn him?" Remarkable words these to come from the lips of one who afterwards indulged in most of these crimes. Henry had pronounced his own condemnation. What a warning is his history to those who would rely on a mere head knowledge of God's truth! Will not such knowledge at the last day make our guilt doubly heinous in the sight of our all pure Maker and Judge?

As I have already told you, the discovery of the art of printing enabled men to study Holy Scripture and the writings of the Christian fathers for themselves. This, as you may imagine,

* "*Misdeeds*."

† Rom. vi.

greatly aided in England the advance of those opinions which Luther was propagating abroad. Men now discovered for themselves that the Church of Rome had added to her creed many things that were contrary to Scripture and the teaching of the ancient fathers. But there was yet another thing which gave great impulse to the reforming party in England. We find that at different periods of our history some all-absorbing occupation has been followed almost to the exclusion of everything else. During the Norman period warlike pursuits were the order of the day. English youths were early trained to manly feats of strength ; and no man's education was considered complete until he could shoulder his crossbow, or wield his knightly sword. But the days of chivalry (as they were called) were fast dying out. At the period of which I am writing, certain men of profound genius and learning arose, who inspired their fellow-men with a desire of studying what had hitherto been comparatively unknown. Erasmus, the friend of Sir Thomas More, was one of these. The Greek language, which, with some rare exceptions, had never been studied, was now diligently read. A great part of Holy Scripture was originally written in this language ; so that many had now no need to study a doubtful English translation, but could read the sacred words just as they issued from the hands of the inspired writers, their deep meaning and glorious significancy being unsullied by translation into another tongue. Then arose in the English Church men, learned, moderate, and holy, who in their writings and in their preaching avoided the wild fanaticism of the Lollard on the one hand, and the error and superstition of the Romanist on the other — men who compose the very bone and marrow of the English Church. The names of three such, Dean Collet, Hugh Latimer, and Nicholas Ridley occur to my mind at this moment. The first of these men did not live to see the principles he upheld fully established ; but the two last, like the Primate Cranmer, were permitted by God to seal the cause with their blood. I would once more remind you that such men are to be distinguished from the followers of Wiclif. The leaders of our English Reformation were doubtless to a certain extent influenced by the opinions of Wiclif, but in many very important respects, as you will see by-and-by, they were wholly opposed to him. We, in these days, have great cause to be thankful that it was so. Dean Collet, whose name I mentioned just now, died in the year 1521. As we are talking on this subject, I will say a few words about him.

He was a man of great learning, piety, and munificence. *Among other things, he founded St. Paul's School, which noble institution he designed for the free education of one hundred and*

fifty poor children. A writer of the day gives him “a great character for his learning, his talent in preaching, his exemplary life, and engaging temper;” and tells us that his founding St. Paul’s School not only “improved the Londoners, but awakened an inclination for letters, and polished the whole country.”*

I would now, however, chiefly call your attention to Dean Collet’s religious opinions, which have more to do with our present subject. In the year 1498, he revived the godly practice at Oxford of reading lectures upon Holy Scripture; and when afterwards he was made Dean of St. Paul’s, he diligently preached God’s Word, speaking on subjects which in those days would have brought him under the imputation of heresy, had not the charitable-minded Archbishop Warham protected him. Though many Lollards attended the preaching of the Dean, it is to the lasting honour of the Primate that he refused to listen to the malicious accusations of Collet’s enemies. He set a high value on the piety and learning of the reformer, and determined he should continue in his deanery.

Like most of the holy men you have read of in earlier times, Collet led an austere life. He cared little for the vanities and pleasures of the world, but spent his time in doing good to others, and in prayer, meditation, and study. While he ate his frugal meal, an attendant read aloud to him St. Paul’s Epistles, or some other portion of Holy Writ—a pious practice, which had been observed in the Church for many ages. This good reformer has left several works behind him, two of which I may mention, “Prayers for daily use,” and “Exhortation to a holy life.”

While Dean Collet was influencing the students at Oxford, Hugh Latimer was preparing the way for the Reformation at Cambridge, the sister university. Fervent, practical, and full of eloquence were Latimer’s sermons. With burning words he advocated the study of Holy Scripture, and exposed the false system of Rome. Hundreds flocked to hear him. His words carried conviction to many honest hearts; for numbers of Latimer’s followers dispersed abroad over the country, and not a little advanced the cause of the Reformation by propagating the truths he advocated. One young man, of diminutive stature, but of rare intellect, might have been seen standing among that throng of eager listeners, who afterwards both by his life and preaching, and in the end, by his noble death, greatly advanced the cause of the Reformation in England. The name of Nicholas Ridley must ever be held in veneration by all true-hearted English churchmen.

* Polidore Virgil.

CHAPTER LIV.

HENRY VIII. *continued.*—1530 to 1534.

WHILE THE POPE REIGNS SUPREME OVER THE ENGLISH CHURCH, ALL ATTEMPTS AT REFORM HOPELESS—HENRY, IRRITATED BY POPE CLEMENT'S REFUSAL TO DECIDE THE MATTER OF THE DIVORCE, BEGINS TO THINK OF RENOUNCING ALL ALLEGIANCE TO THE CHURCH OF ROME—HE DETERMINES TO CONSULT THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES ON THE SUBJECT—THEY DECIDE IN FAVOUR OF THE DIVORCE—DR. CRANMER—HIS ZEAL IN HENRY'S SERVICE—HENRY PROCEEDS TO HUMBLE HIS CLERGY—THEY ARE ACCUSED OF HAVING VIOLATED THE ACT OF PROVISORS BY RECOGNIZING WOLSEY'S AUTHORITY AS PAPAL LEGATE—THEY PAY A LARGE SUM TO APPEASE HENRY, AND AT LENGTH CONSENT TO OWN HIM SUPREME OVER CHURCH AND STATE—PASSING OF VARIOUS ANTI-PAPAL LAWS—THE BISHOPS AND CLERGY DECIDE IN FAVOUR OF THE KING'S DIVORCE—HENRY MARRIES ANN BOLEYN—DEATH OF ARCHBISHOP WARHAM—DR. CRANMER IS ELECTED BY THE KING ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY—HIS RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT THE HONOUR—POPE CLEMENT UNWILLINGLY CONSENTS TO SANCTION CRANMER'S CONSECRATION—ANN BOLEYN CROWNED QUEEN—RAGE OF POPE CLEMENT—HE THREATENS TO EXCOMMUNICATE HENRY—THIS DECIDES THE KING ON RENOUNCING ALL ALLEGIANCE TO THE POPE—FINAL SEPARATION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND FROM THE CHURCH OF ROME—THE BISHOPS, CLERGY, AND PEOPLE OF ENGLAND ALL CONCUR IN THIS IMPORTANT DECISION.

I WILL now relate as briefly as possible the causes which led to the final separation of the Church of England from the Church of Rome; which most important event secured to our English Church her original freedom and independence. Nearly all the English bishops and clergy at this time were fully alive to the corruption which existed in the religious faith of their country, and would fain have set to work to remedy the evil; but one great barrier still existed, which rendered all attempts at reform hopeless. The supremacy of the Pope of Rome in all spiritual matters was still acknowledged in England; and the Pope set his face doggedly and persistently against all reform, however reasonable and moderate. But the arbitrary will of a tyrannical prince at length accomplished what the whole nation dared not attempt. Wearied and irritated by the long delay which the refusal of the Pope to sanction his divorce had caused, Henry began to consider in his own mind whether some other plan could not be devised which would help him out of the difficulty. To renounce altogether the Pope's supremacy, had, if you remember, more than once occurred to the mind of the King; and to a man like Henry, full of his own importance, and eager for absolute sway, the idea was by no means unacceptable.* We learn from good authority that Wolsey once

* Cavendish.

hinted to his master, that it would be well to consult the foreign universities as well as the Pope on the subject of the divorce; but while there seemed any hope of the Pontiff relenting, Henry had not seriously entertained the proposition. Pope Clement, however, still remained obdurate; and so, when the notion was again presented to the King, he eagerly caught at it; and the man who proposed it was at once received into high favour. The name of Dr. Cranmer is familiar to the most ignorant among us. This great leader of our English Reformation had already made himself conspicuous by his learning and strong attachment to the principles of the moderate reformers. While men's minds were fully occupied in discussing the subject of the King's divorce, he dropped a remark in private, which was repeated to Henry, who lost no time in acting upon it. "The King," remarked Cranmer, "would do well to collect together the opinions of the chief universities and divines of Europe, and if these be in his favour, of a truth his own clergy may decide the question." "Verily," exclaimed Henry, with his usual bluntness, "this man hath the sow by the right ear." Cranmer was at once sent for to court, and was soon fully occupied in his royal master's business. Having procured the opinion of the English universities, the members of which, after considerable deliberation, declared in favour of the King's divorce, Cranmer travelled abroad to collect the opinion of the most learned foreigners at those universities which still acknowledged the authority of the Pope. Finding that their decision was also favourable to him, Henry no longer hesitated. He determined to obtain the opinion of his own bishops and clergy; and if they agreed in sanctioning his divorce, he would set the Pope at defiance, and marry the woman on whom he had set his affections. The dream which Henry now began to indulge of unlimited control over Church and State, apart from the Roman Pontiff, was too agreeable to be relinquished; and in order to further his design, he determined by one bold, decisive measure to humble the bishops and clergy, and compel them to bow implicitly to his tyrannical will. The whole body of the clergy were accused by Henry of having violated the Act of Provisors, because they had recognised Cardinal Wolsey as papal legate, and had obeyed him accordingly. This law, which, we have seen, had been so often violated, Henry was now determined to enforce, for it opened a door to his ambitious designs. So often does God make use of weak and sinful instruments to effect His *mighty* purposes. In vain the clergy urged that Henry had *himself* connived at the Cardinal's proceedings, and had made *him* his chief minister. The only answer they received was,

that the Act of Provisors was still in force, and the King would go the full length of the law, unless they were willing to offer him a large sum of money by way of compensation, with full and entire submission to his sovereign will. The crafty and tyrannical monarch accomplished his purpose. The clergy of the province of Canterbury alone paid into the royal coffers the sum of 100,000*l.*, and the province of York 18,840*l.*, an enormous amount in those days, when we consider it was worth more than some fifteen or twenty times as much as the same sum now. But this was not all. Henry determined "to strike while the iron was hot, and required of his humbled clergy a still more startling concession. He refused to pardon them unless they submitted to own him their sole and supreme head next and immediately after Christ."* Startled and amazed at this, the clergy hesitated. It is true that the English parliament and ecclesiastics of England had ever admitted that the King of England, in his own dominions, has no earthly superior; but when they were required to consent to the sovereign's arbitrary interference in religious matters, they naturally drew back and hesitated to comply. They were well aware that such weapons in the hand of a resolute tyrant like Henry would crush for ever their freedom and independence. The fact that the bishops and clergy were forced to submit to these humiliating conditions shows us the extent to which Henry had contrived to tyrannize over his subjects. His will had become law, and none dared oppose him. For many ages the clergy had been permitted to pass laws wholly independent of the sovereign. Now Henry compelled them to declare that no new canons whatever should be made without the royal license, and that the Pope should no longer be referred to, or exercise any authority whatever in the matter. Englishmen had so long lived under a different system, that this sudden change in the affairs of the Church must have filled the minds of many with surprise and alarm. Yet I would have you remember it was but the revival of a state of things which had existed in England during the free Saxon times, before the tyranny of the Norman rule had been established. In those early days, Church laws had been made under the authority of the King and English bishops, and not under the Pope. The steps which Henry now proceeded to take must have forewarned the Roman Pontiff of the coming storm. Laws were passed which struck at the very root of all papal authority; yet Henry was supported in these measures by the Primate and the greater part of the clergy. This fact will be no matter of surprise to *you, for you have seen how in England, from the earliest times,*

* Collier.

the unjust exactions and tyranny of the court of Rome had been steadily resisted. England was now only asserting the freedom which in earlier and purer times had been hers.

In the year 1532, the famous tax, called Peter's Pence, which you remember from Saxon times had been paid annually, into the Roman treasury, was finally abolished, together with all the various payments which the popes had hitherto claimed from the English Church. The bishops and clergy of England were no longer to look to Rome for their presentations, but were to be elected and ordained in England, as had been the custom before the English Church became the vassal of the Church of Rome. All appeals to Rome in ecclesiastical causes were forbidden, for every cause was to be determined in England, according to ancient usage. Matters were indeed rapidly approaching a climax. The papal power in England was tottering to its fall. Meanwhile, the matter of the King's divorce was still undecided; but the opinion of the English bishops and clergy was at length obtained. It proved favourable to the King, who, on the 14th November, 1532, was privately married to Ann Boleyn. It was mainly through the exertions of Cranmer that this matter of the divorce, which had been pending for six years, was brought to a decisive issue; and Henry, delighted with the zeal he had shown in his cause, determined to reward him by offering for his acceptance the highest post in the kingdom.

Archbishop Warham died in the year 1532. Cranmer was at that time abroad. Henry showed discernment in appreciating Cranmer's merits. Strongly opposed to the pretensions of the Roman Pontiff, and yet of a gentle and conciliatory disposition, Cranmer appeared to Henry the very man to guide the helm of the Church of England at this important juncture. Cranmer received orders to return home at once. Yet still he lingered. He showed himself by no means eager to seize the proffered honour. A man of retiring and somewhat distrustful disposition, he may have shrunk from encountering the struggle he foresaw was dawning upon the Church. So for seven weeks he lingered abroad, distrusting his own strength and hoping that some better and more dauntless captain might be found to guide the Church's helm. Then the thought that the oath of allegiance to the Bishop of Rome was not as yet finally abolished, may have deterred him; for Cranmer, like many other good and moderate men at that time, had begun seriously to doubt the lawfulness of the Pope's claims; and the Roman Church, Cranmer was well aware, had resolutely refused to sanction those changes which he, in common with the rest of his countrymen, now acknowledged to be more than necessary.

In this, however, as in all other matters, Henry was determined to have his will, and so Cranmer was forced to consent. It was a great and sudden elevation, for the new favourite was but a private priest. The sudden promotion of his favourites, and their equally rapid disgrace, were vagaries in which Henry delighted to indulge; yet in this case we see clearly how God in His wisdom overruled the passing whim of a fickle prince to the final good of our Church.

Meanwhile, Pope Clement VII. regarded with serious alarm the intended promotion of Cranmer. He knew full well that the darling project of the Primate-elect was the reformation of his Church. That his scheme would be carried out in defiance of the Court of Rome, he could have no doubt, for had not Cranmer already joined with some of the foreign reformers, and had he not also urged Henry to act independently of Rome in the matter of the divorce? Holy and consistent in his daily life, Cranmer already exercised a powerful influence over the mind of his wayward sovereign. Surely, thought Clement, if King, Primate, and the bulk of the English nation join in asserting their freedom, the See of Rome must needs lose one of her most valuable allies. In order to avert so great an evil, Clement was ready to make one last effort to conciliate Henry. As yet, the King and people of England had not publicly proclaimed themselves independent of Rome, although, as we have seen, several anti-papal Acts had been passed; for, we are told, "Henry resolved not to begin the breach till he was forced to it by the Pope." He therefore applied to Clement to confirm Cranmer's appointment. The Pope reluctantly consented to send over the necessary bulls for the new Primate's consecration, feeling at the same time that, so to speak, he was signing his own death-warrant. Upon the arrival of these bulls, Cranmer was consecrated by the Bishops of Lincoln, Exeter, and St. Asaph. One difficulty, however, presented itself; Cranmer, in common with his predecessors, must take the customary oath of allegiance to the Pope. The honest mind of the Primate shrank from acknowledging with his lips what he secretly intended to contradict by his acts. So the following protest was inserted in the usual form, and several times repeated by Cranmer during the ceremony: "I do not intend by this oath to restrict myself from full liberty of saying and advising whatever may concern the reformation of religion or the good of the state of England, or of executing such reforms as may seem to be required in the English Church."

Archbishop Cranmer now set himself in earnest, in conjunction with the rest of the prelates and nobles of England, pub-

licly to decide the matter of the King's divorce. In ten days, the affair, which had been for six years pending, was finally settled in favour of Henry, who, in June, 1533, caused Ann Boleyn to be publicly crowned Queen. When the news of this bold measure reached the ears of Pope Clement, he was furious. The authority of the Holy Church of Rome had been openly defied, and the Pope utterly set at nought. An unheard-of outrage had been committed on the dignity of the Roman See; yet the Pope was powerless, for the King, the Primate, and the bulk of the English nation were ranged against him in battle array, and it was now too late to recede. One last resource yet remained—a resource which in former ages had rarely failed. But times were strangely altered, and when the thunders of excommunication hung over the King of England, the bold and determined monarch decided at once to shake off altogether the Papal yoke. The threatened excommunication was an unwise, impolitic measure on the part of the Roman Church, for it severed England for ever from her communion. Although Henry's inordinate ambition and want of principle aided in bringing about this important event, it is very necessary that we should remember the English Church fully sanctioned and approved of the measure. Those who still own the supreme authority of the Roman Church would fain have us believe that the arbitrary and tyrannical will of a bad prince was the sole cause which had led to the separation of our church from the see of Rome. The simple facts of history (of which, unfortunately, too many of us are wholly ignorant) will at once disprove this false statement. Henry gained the sanction and consent of his whole church when he broke away from the allegiance of the Pope of Rome. The following question was solemnly proposed to the bishops and clergy assembled at the provincial synods of Canterbury and York, in the year 1534: "Hath the Bishop of Rome any more authority in England by the laws of God than any other foreign bishop?" The answer was prompt and unanimous, "No."* When I add that the universities, the different chapters, monks, and friars, throughout the kingdom also declared their assent, enough will have been said to prove that our church willingly and deliberately freed herself from the thralldom of Rome, and boldly asserted her ancient independence.

* Massingberd, p. 281.

CHAPTER LV.

HENRY VIII. *continued.*—1534 to 1535.

FISHER, BISHOP OF ROCHESTER, AND SIR THOMAS MORE, INCUR THE WRATH OF THE KING BY REFUSING TO TAKE THE OATH OF SUPREMACY—HENRY DETERMINES ON THEIR DESTRUCTION—LAST HOURS OF FISHER—HIS BRAVE AND PIOUS BEHAVIOUR ON THE SCAFFOLD—EXECUTION OF SIR THOMAS MORE—HENRY, SUPPORTED BY ARCHBISHOP CRANMER, MAKES KNOWN THAT HE INTENDS TO REFORM THE CHURCH—DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WITH REGARD TO THIS IMPORTANT QUESTION—THREE PARTIES IN THE CHURCH—MEANING OF THE TERM “PROTESTANT”—DIFFICULTY OF RECONCILING THE THREE PARTIES—ARCHBISHOP CRANMER WELL SUITED IN MANY RESPECTS TO GRAPPLE WITH THE DIFFICULTY—HIS CONCILIATING DISPOSITION—HIS CONDUCT DEFENDED—THE ROMAN CATHOLIC PRELATES ENTIRELY APPROVE OF THE SEPARATION OF THEIR CHURCH FROM THE DOMINION OF THE SEE OF ROME—OPINIONS OF BISHOPS GARDINER, BONNER, AND TONSTAL ON THIS SUBJECT—THEIR WORDS A REFUTATION OF THE MODERN DOCTRINE OF ROME WITH REGARD TO THE PAPAL SUPREMACY—CRANMER PROPOSES TO PARLIAMENT THAT HENRY SHOULD BE PREVAILED ON TO SANCTION THE TRANSLATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE—HE GAINS HIS POINT—ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF AN OPEN BIBLE CONSIDERED—PROPER WAY OF STUDYING HOLY SCRIPTURE—MODIFICATIONS OF THE LAW FOR THE PUNISHMENT OF HERETICS—HENRY’S CRUEL AND TYRANNICAL CONDUCT.

HENRY’S prompt and tyrannical conduct paralyzed the minds of his people. The main body of the bishops and clergy had bowed to his sovereign will. They had acknowledged him supreme head over church and state; and they had consented to declare his marriage with Catharine of Arragon null and void. It was at this important juncture that two men boldly defied the wrath of the King, and refused to tender their submission in the precise words required by the haughty tyrant. A narrow-minded fanaticism would condemn Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Sir Thomas More as bigoted Romanists, because they refused at once to transfer their allegiance from the Pope of Rome to their headstrong monarch. But the lives and deaths of these Christian men prove them to have been noble, true-hearted Englishmen, worthy of honour in any age. Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More had long been friends. They had both enjoyed great happiness and prosperity; and when in a moment all faded from their grasp, they cheerfully bowed to the will of God, and were well content to share with one another sorrow and death. Sir Thomas More had long been high in the King’s favour; for, as Lord Chancellor, he had served his sovereign with loyalty and zeal. But More was a conscientious man, and when required to renounce all allegiance to the see of Rome, and publicly to declare his belief *that Henry’s marriage with Catharine was unlawful*, he hesi-

tated, and at length refused to take the oaths. He was not as yet prepared to go the full length of Henry's demands; so he prudently endeavoured to avert the storm which hung over him by retiring into private life. Such a step cost Sir Thomas More but little effort, for he was a devoted husband and father, and the honours of the world had little charm for him. But King Henry had already tasted the sweets of absolute power; and rather than allow it to slip from his grasp, he determined to sacrifice the lives of Fisher and More, that the nation might be intimidated by the ruin of these good and loyal Englishmen. It will do you no harm to dwell for a few moments on the last hours of the good bishop, for I am sorry to say I have not space to give you any further account of Sir Thomas More. Archbishop Cranmer, who felt real respect for Fisher's character, although he differed from him on some points, did his utmost to induce Henry to be patient with him, but without success. The royal mandate went forth. More and Fisher were committed to the Tower. Fisher was now old and infirm; a long weary imprisonment was fast hastening his end, when an event occurred which speedily brought him to a more violent but less lingering death. The Pope, delighted with Fisher's constancy to the see of Rome, created him at this juncture cardinal. Nothing could possibly have been more ill-timed than such promotion; for although the aged prelate declared that "if the cardinal's hat lay at his feet, he would not stoop to pick it up," Henry's jealousy was roused, and he at once issued the writ for Fisher's execution. Bearing the cruel mandate of death, the Lieutenant of the Tower approached the Bishop's bedside. It was then five o'clock in the morning, and Fisher was buried in profound slumber. The lieutenant awoke him, and informed him that it was his Majesty's pleasure that he should suffer death that very day. "Well," replied Fisher, with Christian calmness, "if this is your errand, ye bring me no great news, for I have looked a long time for this message, and I humbly thank his Majesty that it pleaseth him to rid me of all this worldly business."

After he had reposed quietly for two hours longer, the Bishop rose, and put on his best and cleanest attire; "for," said he, "this is our marriage-day, and it behoveth us to use more cleanliness for the solemnity thereof." The fatal hour at length arrived. The Bishop, clasping a copy of the New Testament to his breast, and devoutly making the sign of the cross on his forehead, left his dreary prison-house for ever. It was no gloomy prospect that the pious prelate saw before him; for, beyond the dark scaffold with its sable hangings, there opened a glorious

vista of never-ending happiness and peace. As the procession moved towards the place of execution, there was a short delay. Fisher had ever loved and valued God's Holy Word; and in his hour of extremity he turned to it for comfort and help. Leaning for support against the wall—for he was very weak and infirm—he reverently raised his eyes towards heaven, and opening the New Testament, murmured, “O Lord! this is the last time that ever I shall open this book; let some comfortable place now chance unto me, whereby I, Thy poor servant, may glorify Thee in this my last hour.” The prayer of the pious Bishop was answered. His eyes rested on those glorious words of our Blessed Saviour, so familiar to us all: “This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” Closing the book, and once more pressing it to his breast, he exclaimed, with pious fervour, “Blessed Lord! surely here is learning enough for me to my life's end!” When he was come to the foot of the scaffold, the sheriff's men offered to assist him up the steps; but the aged prelate dauntlessly replied, “Nay, masters; seeing I came thus far, let me alone, and ye shall see me shift for myself well enough.” At that moment, a glorious burst of sunlight fell on the Bishop's pale and sunken face. Claspings his hands, he exclaimed, “Accedite ad Eum, et illuminamini, et facies vestræ non confundentur.”* The moment had arrived. The executioner knelt down and asked Fisher's forgiveness. “I forgive thee,” said he, “with all my heart; and I trust ye shall see me overcome this storm lustily.” Then, turning towards the vast mass of people, whose solemn silence showed their deep interest in the sad scene, he exclaimed, with a loud voice, “Christian people! I am come here to die for the faith of Christ's Holy Catholic Church; I thank God I have never feared death, yet I would desire you all to help and assist me with your prayers, that at the very point and instant of death's stroke, I may in that very moment stand stedfast, without failing in any one point of the Catholic faith, free from any fear. I beseech God, of His almighty goodness, to save the King and this realm, that it may please Him to hold His holy hand over it, and send the King a good Council.” “These words,” remarks Fuller, “he spake with such a cheerful countenance, such a stout and constant courage, and such a reverent gravity, that he appeared to all men not only void of fear, but also glad of death.” Then kneeling down, he chanted, with a steady voice, the soul-stirring words of the Te Deum, and laying his head on the block, joy-

* “Come unto God, and be ye enlightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed.”

fully welcomed the stroke which would free him from all his pains, and land him safely in the haven of everlasting peace and rest.*

Not long afterwards, the noble-minded and talented Sir Thomas More followed his friend to the scaffold, and met his end with the courage of a true Christian hero. Surely the deaths of such men as these prove to us, more than the most eloquent sermon could do, the comforting and sustaining power of Christ's religion.

I must now describe, as impartially as possible, the great events which follow the deaths of Fisher and More. Before, however, we proceed with the subject of the Reformation, I would have you turn back, and read over again carefully the Twenty-seventh Chapter; you will then be reminded what those abuses were, of which it was now considered necessary to rid the Church of England.

We have seen that the casting off of the Papal supremacy was decidedly a popular movement. But when Henry, by the advice of Cranmer and many other Bishops, publicly proclaimed that he intended to sanction the remodelling of, and altering of the existing mode of worship, that the Church might be purified from the corruptions Rome had heaped upon her, you will not be surprised to hear that there was great difference of opinion as to how far, and in what way such reformation should proceed. Some few would have been well satisfied to let things remain as they were; others were willing to support a moderate reform; while a considerable body of earnest men, who had held counsel with the Reformers abroad, would fain have seen the faith of the Church wholly and entirely remodelled. As I shall frequently have to allude again to these three parties in the Church, I must, for the sake of making the subject clear to you, distinguish them by their several titles. Those who were satisfied that things should go on as formerly, and were content to receive most of the doctrines taught by the Church of Rome, I shall call "Roman Catholics," or "Romanists." The second, who were anxious to restore the faith of the Church to her original purity, and were desirous of a moderate reform, I shall call "Catholics;" while those who clamoured for a sweeping reformation, and would fain have followed the example of the foreign reformers, I shall designate as "Protestants."†

* Fuller.

† Properly speaking, the term "Protestant" alone cannot belong to any member of our English Church, although, while retaining Catholic doctrine and practice, she "protests," it is true, against the errors of Rome. It was

To harmonize all these discordant elements was, as you may suppose, no very easy matter. But the gentle and conciliating mind of Cranmer was, in some respects, not ill-suited to grapple with the difficulty. He has been accused—I think wrongfully—of surrendering his own convictions in order to curry favour with his sovereign, and to ingratiate himself with those who had influence in the State. But Cranmer was a man of peace. He hated strife and discord, and was willing to surrender certain points, which he honestly considered not absolutely necessary, rather than make a breach or division in the Church. On several occasions Cranmer certainly carried this principle too far; but he erred in trying to do good, and every allowance should be made for the man who, with a good end in view, commits an error in judgment only.

Cranmer, however, like most men who try to please all parties, contrived to satisfy none, and by taking a middle course became generally unpopular.

Among the Roman Catholic Bishops who took a prominent part in the events of the Reformation were Gardiner and Bonner. I think all must agree that the latter was an unscrupulous, cruel, and time-serving man; but Gardiner was an earnest and conscientious prelate, and was willing to sanction certain reforms in his Church. It is remarkable that both these prelates, who are so honoured by Roman Catholics in these days, publicly expressed their entire approval of the separation of the English Church from the dominion of the Pope of Rome. Their own words prove this. I have taken the following passage from a celebrated work published at this time by Bishop Gardiner, to which Bonner wrote a preface. After stating that Parliament had agreed to acknowledge Henry VIII. supreme head on earth of the English Church, he added: “In which act no new thing was introduced; only they determined that a power which of Divine right belongs to the prince should be more clearly asserted, so as to remove the cloud from the eyes of the vulgar, with which the *falsely pretended power of the Bishop of Rome has now, for some years, overshadowed them.*”*

Tonstal, Bishop of Durham, also, who, I believe, is generally given to the followers of Luther, who, in the year 1529, entered a protest against an edict which was passed at a Parliament held at Spire, when it was decided that no further reformation should take place in the Church. The term “Protestant,” therefore, does not properly signify a protest against Roman error, but against the edict of Spire, and with this the English had nothing whatever to do. Observe, that from one end of our Prayer Book to the other the term “Protestant” never occurs; therefore it is clear our reformed Church never recognised it.

* *Stephen Gardiner, “De verâ Obedientiâ.”*

placed in the ranks of the Romish bishops, likewise expressed in strong terms his approval of the step Henry had taken. "The King hath," he says, "rescued the English Church from the encroachments of the court of Rome, and for this he deserves praise ; for the King has only reduced matters to their original state, and helped the Church of England to her ancient freedom." I mention these facts, because Romanists now would fain shut out from the pale of the Church Catholic all who refuse submission to the Bishop of Rome. The conduct of their own leaders at the time of the Reformation at once condemns such a false and unscriptural theory. It is only those who are entirely ignorant of the facts connected with the past history of our Church who could be led away by such an error.

One of Cranmer's first acts was to bring before Convocation (or the general meeting of the bishops and clergy) a proposal that Henry should be urged to sanction an English translation of the Holy Scriptures. After some little opposition the motion was carried. There can be no doubt that the translation of the Bible was one of the chief blessings which the Reformation conferred on us. As Englishmen, we have indeed every reason to be thankful that God's Holy Word is now no longer confined to the few, or written in a tongue that only the most learned can comprehend. Yet we cannot be surprised that, at the time, such a movement met with considerable opposition ; nor have we any right to say, as many do now, that the sole object of those who opposed the translation of the Scriptures was to blind the eyes of the people, and to withhold from them the truth of the Gospel, that they might not be able to discover the errors which Rome had so long palmed upon them. Such a notion is popular enough in these days ; but I have no hesitation in saying that it is for the most part untrue. I do not deny that many of the more violent Romanists may have opposed it for such a reason ; but I feel sure that men like Bishop Gardiner (and there were many such) were actuated by no such unworthy motives ; nor do I see that their objections should be at once condemned as bigoted and unreasonable. It is useless to deny that up to the time of the Reformation little good had apparently come from the indiscriminate reading of Holy Scripture. The extravagances of the Lollards, the violence of many of the foreign reformers, had inspired the minds of thinking men with serious alarm. It was not every man, who, like Cranmer, could pierce the future, and see the ultimate benefit of an open Bible. Far be *it from me* to underrate so great a blessing ; for have we not every day cause to thank God for it? Yet because a thing is *right in itself*, we do no good by shutting our eyes to its abuses.

Surely it is better to acknowledge such abuses, that we may the better guard against them.

Gardiner alleged that the indiscriminate use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue had a tendency to promote heresy. It is quite true that the reading of the Bible, in order to found a religious system upon it, irrespective of the teaching of the creeds and the guidance of the early Christian Church, ever has been and ever will be productive of heresy and schism. Most, if not all, of our modern religious sects, however extravagant and contrary to Catholic truth their opinions may be, yet found those opinions upon passages taken out of Holy Scripture. God did not give us the Bible in order that we might, each one of us, found a religion of our own upon it; but that having been instructed from our childhood in the principles of the Christian religion, as taught by the Apostles and their immediate successors, we might *from* the Bible "*prove* all things, and hold fast that which is good." Let us be thankful that, in the Anglican branch of the Catholic Church in this land, we have not only an open Bible, but also an Apostolic ministry and a primitive Liturgy, or Book of Common Prayer, for our guidance in all important matters of faith and practice.

Another point for which Archbishop Cranmer struggled was the repeal of the cruel act for the punishment of heretics, which, you remember, was passed in the reign of Henry IV. I would have you know, however, that people were not to be left at liberty to desert the Church and publish what errors they pleased; only the trial for heresy was to be conducted on principles more just and humane, nor was any one to be convicted for speaking against the authority of the Bishop of Rome. The humane and gentle-minded Primate would, I doubt not, have fain abolished altogether the punishment of death in cases of heresy. As it was, the modification of this law, although a step in the right direction, became nevertheless a fearful two-edged sword in the hands of an unscrupulous and cruel tyrant like Henry. Many honest-minded reformers, who refused to bend their opinion entirely to the King's will, were ruthlessly handed over to the executioner; while equally earnest Romanists, who, like Fisher and More, hesitated to take the oath of supremacy to Henry, and cast off all allegiance to the Pope, were condemned to the same fate. The astonished and perplexed citizens of London were often called on to witness a strange sight. Romanists and stanch reformers were hurried to death together; for however they might differ amongst themselves, Henry was determined they should all bow to his iron sway.

CHAPTER LVI.

HENRY VIII. *continued.*—1535 to 1539.

EVILS CONNECTED WITH THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND—HENRY CONTEMPLATES THE SUPPRESSION OF THE RELIGIOUS HOUSES—THE UNWORTHY MOTIVES WHICH ACTUATED HIM—HE PROPOSES TO INSTITUTE A SEARCHING INQUIRY INTO THE ABUSES OF THE MONASTIC SYSTEM—HE EMPLOYS IMPROPER AGENTS TO DO THE WORK—THOMAS CROMWELL—HENRY MAKES USE OF THIS UNSCRUPULOUS LAYMAN—GIVES HIM UNLIMITED AUTHORITY OVER THE BISHOPS AND CLERGY—THE ARGUMENTS OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE SUPPRESSION OF THE MONASTERIES—HENRY DETERMINES ON THE RUIN OF THE LESSER RELIGIOUS HOUSES—STORY OF THE DISSOLUTION AND DESTRUCTION OF THE ABBEY AND MONASTERY OF CHRISTCHURCH, IN LONDON—THE DESTRUCTION OF CHRISTCHURCH IS FOLLOWED BY THE SUPPRESSION OF ALL THE LESSER MONASTERIES—MISERY CAUSED BY THIS WHOLESALE SPOLIATION—INSURRECTION IN THE NORTH—HENRY DETERMINES ON THE SUPPRESSION OF ALL THE LARGER MONASTERIES—OPPOSITION OF CRANMER AND LATIMER TO THE SCHEME—ARGUMENT OF HUGH LATIMER IN FAVOUR OF MALVERN ABBEY—STORY OF THE RUIN AND DISSOLUTION OF THE ANCIENT ABBEY OF GLASTONBURY—ITS WEALTH AND IMPORTANCE—WORTHY CONDUCT OF ITS ABBOT AND MONKS—RICHARD WHITING, THE ABBOT, REFUSES TO SURRENDER HIS MONASTERY INTO THE KING'S HANDS—HIS CRUEL MURDER—DESTRUCTION OF THE NOBLE ABBEY AND MONASTERY.

THE Reformation conferred on our Church and country many important benefits. I have already shown you what some of those benefits were. Unhappily, everything good in this world is more or less marred by what is evil. There is a dark as well as a light side to every great national movement; a remark which specially applies to all religious changes, and particularly to our English Reformation. Nor need we shrink from such an assertion; for while we own with thankfulness the blessings we have inherited from this great event, we shall but give a handle to those who condemn it, if we blindly shut our eyes to its attendant evils. I am about in this chapter to give you an account of the total annihilation of all the ancient monasteries of England. Many will tell you that the dissolution of the monasteries was a great blessing, and not a curse to our country. Some advantage, I own, may have been derived from it; yet I think, when you have heard all, you will be forced to acknowledge that the evil which accompanied the dissolution of the religious houses well-nigh outweighed the good. In the first place, the motives which led Henry to take this step were utterly unworthy of a Christian king. Although in this history I have fully set before you the advantages of the monastic system, I have not attempted to hide or gloss over its defects. In former times, as you have seen, the monasteries had been

of infinite service to our country ; but they had now become so corrupt, that in order to restore them to their primitive usefulness, many great and important changes were necessary. Had Henry merely contemplated the *reformation* of the monks and their system, I doubt not a great blessing would have accompanied such a scheme, sanctioned as it would have been by the heads of our Church, and by many of the more enlightened abbots themselves. But in the violent proceedings I am now about to describe, Henry's sole aim was to assert his own tyrannical will, and to enrich himself with treasure, which belonged of right to the Church, and to pour into his own coffers riches which his pious forefathers had dedicated to the sole honour of Almighty God, and the benefit of His poor. You remember how, in the reigns of Henry IV. and Henry V., several determined attacks had been made on the patrimony of the Church. Then, as now, there were unscrupulous and profane men, who, caring nothing for religion, hoped to induce the King to suppress the monasteries, that they might share the spoil. You have seen how successfully at that time Archbishops Arundel and Chicheley averted the storm which now burst with all its fury on the Church. Few of our English sovereigns have shown less real regard for religion than Henry. As long as it suited his purpose he was willing to tender a certain amount of outward respect to his Maker ; but the love of his own power and authority, and the desire to appear great in the eyes of the world, were the motives which usually actuated him, while the glory of God and the welfare of the nation always occupied the second place. You can well imagine, therefore, that when some of Henry's councillors ventured to suggest that it was his bounden duty as supreme head of the Church to inquire into the abuses of the religious houses, he eagerly entertained the proposal, which not only flattered his vanity, but opened to him an easy method by which he could replenish to overflowing his exhausted exchequer.

I own that some such inquiry into the state of the monastic houses was both just and advisable, had the end in view been a righteous one, and the persons employed been actuated by pure and unselfish motives. Unhappily, this was not the case. Henry, finding his new position as supreme head of the Church somewhat burdensome, determined to shift a part of the weight and responsibility on to other shoulders. Thomas Cromwell, the friend of Wolsey, was at this time high in favour with the capricious King. He was a bold, unscrupulous man, full of *activity and energy*. Henry appointed him his Vicar-general in ecclesiastical affairs, gave him full authority, though a lay-

man, to visit the whole body of the clergy, not excepting even the bishops, with power to inquire into the abuses of the monasteries, preside at all synods, and suspend, if necessary, the Archbishop himself. Power like this, in the hands of such a man as Cromwell, was dangerous in the extreme; nor can we greatly wonder that many preferred the dominion of the Pope to the tyranny and injustice of Henry and his court favourite. Moderate and pious men there were, who foresaw the evil which impended over the Church, and endeavoured to avert it, but without success.

Among other arguments the following reasonable one was submitted to the King. "We earnestly trust your majesty will be pleased," urged these wise counsellors, "not to think of ruining, but of reforming these societies; for if the founding of monasteries was now proposed, we should never allow the present number, nor possibly approve all the existing arrangements. If the excessiveness of their numbers now calls for a suppression of some of them, be pleased to remember the foundations were dedicated to God Almighty. And let this consideration prevail with your majesty, to transfer the estates to some pious use. And even here the matter should be managed with reservation, and a sufficient number of these religious houses be still maintained for both sexes in every county. Thus by this temper your highness will be screened from censure, and show your regard for antiquity and devotion." Henry turned a deaf ear to these honest remonstrances; and Cromwell, fully authorised, began a searching investigation of the lesser monasteries. To aid him in this work, he employed a certain Dr. Layton, who had rendered himself notorious for his unprincipled and fawning behaviour at court. Surely, for a work so important, the holiest, wisest, and most impartial judges should have been chosen; not men whose characters at the best were doubtful, and who, so far from starting to the work with unbiassed minds, were violently opposed to the whole monastic system, and acted as if they thought it their business to report all the evil they could. Although some may approve of the destruction of these ancient seats of learning and holiness, all must own that the most unworthy means were employed to effect their ruin. Henry had determined on their destruction, and little cared how it was brought about. Crimes of the most revolting nature were charged upon the monks. Out of so vast a body of men, some, we may be sure, were living unholy lives; yet when we read of the crimes committed in secret by the inmates of the monasteries, we should do well to remember that these tales were propagated by men who were strongly pre-

judiced against such institutions. It is, at all events, necessary that we should use caution in accepting their statements, as we find that some of these tales were afterwards proved to be false.

The first of these ancient foundations singled out by Henry for destruction was the priory of Christ Church, near Aldgate, in London. It had been founded by the pious Matilda, queen of Henry I., and had long been famous for the piety and hospitality of its inmates. Henry, after having compelled the abbot to surrender, dispersed the monks, and seizing the rich treasure, bestowed the deserted monastery on Sir Thomas Audley, Speaker of the Houses of Parliament; which salutary gift proved, as Fuller remarks, "an excellent recipe to clear his voice, and make him speak shrill and loud for his master." The citizens of London, amazed at this violent proceeding, loudly expressed their disapprobation, and when Sir Thomas offered the materials of the venerable monastery with its stately church to whoever would pull it down, not a man would come forward to join in the sacrilegious work. As it proved, Sir Thomas Audley derived no benefit from the King's unhallowed gift. Patient and willing hands had bestowed such pains on the building, and the cement had become so hardened by age, that the workmen found it well-nigh impossible to dislodge the stones. With infinite labour and expense the work was at length accomplished; but the costly materials, broken to atoms by the fall, remained useless. So true is it, that the unlawful possession of Church property ever brings with it a curse and not a blessing.

The destruction of the priory of Christ Church was followed by the dissolution of many others. We are told that no less than three hundred and seventy-five religious houses were suppressed at this time, and the vast income derived from them absorbed into the King's exchequer. It is difficult to realize the misery and distress which even such partial dissolution of the monasteries caused. For you must remember that the larger and more important religious houses had remained up to this time untouched.

No less than ten thousand monks and nuns were turned adrift on the wide world, to seek their living as they could. Comparatively few were provided for by government. Men who with open-handed generosity had supplied food and shelter to the homeless and aged were now in their turn forced to supplicate for a small pittance to relieve their dire necessity. The fickle populace, who not long before had loudly complained of *the sloth and self-indulgence of the monks*, now warmly sympa-

thized with them, for all their shortcomings were forgotten in their misfortunes. Many a wayfaring man, as he passed hard by the ruined monastery, turned with a tear in his eye to supplicate the blessing of the aged prior, who in grief and poverty still lingered among the ruins of his once peaceful home. Doubtless, many such travellers, to whom, in their hours of need, the monastery had afforded shelter and hospitality, now gratefully offered to the starving monk a share in their frugal meal.

Yet the misery was by no means confined to the monks themselves. Hundreds of sick and aged persons, who up to this time had daily presented themselves at the gate of the neighbouring monastery, and received their pittance of meat and bread, were now left alone to seek a subsistence as best they could, and, as it too often proved, to share with their former benefactors a death of misery and starvation. The spacious hospital where the sick and dying had found comfort for body and soul, the school where the young had been trained in habits of piety and usefulness, the sacred chapel, whose doors had daily stood open to receive the careworn mourner and the penitent sinner, were all closed for ever, and in many instances the whole pile levelled with the ground. Discontent and misery overspread the land. The estates belonging to the monasteries had passed into other hands. Men owned them now who cared little for the poor, and were intent only on enriching themselves. Hospitality was a thing now almost unknown. Large masses of labouring men, deprived of their usual occupation, wandered about homeless and discontented; and at length, headed by some of the monks from the dissolved monasteries, broke out into open rebellion.

Formidable insurrections were set on foot in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, but the resistance was unsuccessful. Henry finally triumphed. He determined to push his advantage, and soon found excuses for compelling the surrender of all the larger monasteries. It is worthy of remark that those who were strongly opposed to the monastic system were forced to own that the greater number of these still observed their original rules, and were of great service to the surrounding neighbourhood. You must not suppose that Cranmer and the rest of the reformed bishops quietly acquiesced in these violent proceedings. The Primate urged Henry to spare these ancient seats of piety and learning, that they might be converted into schools and colleges for education, or made hospitals for the poor. *Hugh Latimer*, Bishop of Worcester, also honestly raised his voice against the sacrilegious spoliation. Both these reformers would gladly have sanctioned any reformation of the monaste-

ries, but strenuously opposed their total destruction. The priory of Great Malvern, which stood on a lovely spot, under the shadow of the Malvern Hills, was well known to the honest Latimer. His diocese had long benefited by the labours of the monks. The Prior was himself the Bishop's intimate friend; and Latimer therefore determined to save, if possible, the venerable abbey and monastery from destruction. He boldly pleaded with Cromwell for his friend. "The Prior," he said, "is an old and worthy man, a good housekeeper, and one that hath daily fed many poor people. He only desires that his house may stand, not in monkery, but so as to be converted to preaching, study, and prayer. Alas! my good lord," remonstrated the worthy prelate, "shall we not see two or three in every shire changed to such a remedy?" Latimer pleaded in vain. The monastery was destroyed and the monks dispersed. Yet the abbey church still stands, to witness to the honest exertions of Latimer. It happily survived the destruction which swept over so many of our abbeys. Some few years ago, it was restored and beautified; so that ever since early Norman times, the solemn chant and joyful hymn of praise have never ceased to sound along its stately aisles.

Many interesting tales and anecdotes are related of this sad and stormy period of our Church's history. I am sorry that I have only space to give you one or two of them.

Of all the ruined monasteries of Old England none is more enshrined in ecclesiastical renown than Glastonbury in Somersetshire. As I have several times in the course of our history alluded to this monastery, a brief account of its destruction will not be uninteresting to you. One of the wealthiest as well as the most ancient of our English monasteries, Glastonbury has ever been connected in the minds of Englishmen with all that is most eventful and interesting in the history of their Church and country. An old tradition thus distinguishes this hallowed spot where in the early days of our British forefathers the Christian ensign was supposed to have been first planted: "Glastonbury is the first ground of God; the first burial-place of the saints; the rise and fountain of all religion in Britain. It was here the first church was built by the disciples of our Lord." The abbey church of Glastonbury rivalled in size and splendour even the cathedrals themselves, and, ever since the days when St. Dunstan paid his devotions there, had been the resort of thousands of pious worshippers. The Abbots of Glastonbury in their wealth and power rivalled even royalty. There is a story told how, in the fourteenth century, the renowned warrior King *Edward I.* with his consort Eleanor celebrated Easter at this

abbey. The Abbot entertained his royal visitors with princely magnificence, but compelled even the powerful monarch to yield precedence to him. Instead of resenting what we should now consider an unwarrantable insult, Edward, who was always ready to yield to ecclesiastical authority, continued to the last to show special favour to the Abbot of Glastonbury, who had so hospitably, yet haughtily entertained him. Now things were wholly changed. A monarch sat upon the throne who cared nothing for religion or antiquity, and was determined to carry out to the utmost his cruel and selfish scheme. Not a single excuse can be found for the destruction of this magnificent church and monastery. Richard Whiting, the Abbot, was a man of exemplary life and earnest piety. The poor and needy blessed him as he passed along the highway, for all had experienced in some way or other his bounty and gentle kindness. The princely hospitality of the Abbot of Glastonbury was known far and wide; while the four hundred monks over whom he presided were daily employed in works of charity and usefulness. The strictest discipline prevailed in the monastery. For the slightest breach of duty the monks suffered severe punishment. The Scriptures were carefully studied, religious services daily and reverently performed; while every useful and ornamental art was diligently cultivated. Exquisite illuminated missals and rich specimens of painted glass are still preserved in our museums, and witness to the skill and patience of the monks of Glastonbury. A curious astronomical clock may be seen in Wells Cathedral, the handiwork of Lightfoot, a monk of this monastery.

When called upon to surrender his monastery into the King's hands, Whiting bravely refused; for he was conscious that he had acted as an honest Christian should do, and that his monks were guiltless of the crimes imputed to them. By surrendering Whiting knew that he would be pleading guilty to the charge; and so he nobly refused to yield to the unjust demand. Henry knew well the virtues and ability of this good man; for he had himself, a short time back, employed him on a difficult embassy; but the arbitrary monarch, who easily forgot any service that had been rendered to him, but never forgave any opposition to his will, determined that Abbot Whiting should feel the full force of his resentment. The aged man's doom was sealed. Hurried to Wells, the oath of supremacy was offered him; and on his again refusing to surrender his abbey into the hands of the destroyer, he was violently seized, and commanded to prepare for instant death. With calmness and serenity Abbot Whiting prepared for the end. One request only he made. As

they passed the gates of the monastery, he entreated his murderers to allow him to enter, if only for a few short moments, that he might bid farewell to his beloved brethren, and recommend himself to their prayers. But all in vain. He pleaded to deaf ears. Immediately behind Glastonbury, there rises a steep hill called the "Tor," which commands a noble view of the surrounding country, and overhangs the monastic buildings. To the summit of this hill the infuriated rabble dragged their aged victim. The sun was now fast sinking in the west; for a few seconds it illuminated the windows of the abbey with glowing tints of ruby and jasper. Richard Whiting turned a long and earnest gaze on the peaceful scene. He knew that the glory of that goodly temple must soon set, never, like the sun, to rise again. He threw himself on his knees. Awed by the old man's reverent demeanour and silent grief, the murderers left him for a brief space undisturbed. The Abbot's eyes still rested fondly on the beloved home which lay so peacefully embosomed among the thick trees. It was the last time God would ever permit him to gaze on the hallowed scene; and inwardly he prayed that it would please Him to preserve it from ruin. Doubtless it was for some wise purpose that the Almighty decreed otherwise. The barbarous murder of the Abbot was followed by the total destruction of his monastery, and the dispersion of all the monks. Happily, the last Abbot of Glastonbury was spared the sight of the ruthless devastation which now ensued. The abbey church became the prey of the plunderers. Sacrilegious hands, eager for the spoil, tore down the rich altar, unroofed the buildings, shivered into a thousand pieces the costly stained-glass windows, and chipped and destroyed the elaborately-carved tracery. The howling blast and ruthless tempest now sweep round the hallowed aisles of this stately temple, glorious even in its decay. The deep-toned bells which in days of yore sounded far over forest and hill, the vesper chant, the solemn litany, the pealing organ are now for ever silent. Who could stand within the ruined precincts of that house of God, and not wish that the sound of prayer and praise might once more ascend from thence to heaven?

CHAPTER LVII.

HENRY VIII. *continued.*—1537 to 1540.

HOSPITALITY EXERCISED BY THE ABBOTS OF OLD—THEIR CHARITABLE SYSTEM DEFENDED BY FULLER—STORY OF HENRY VIII. AND THE ABBOT OF READING—DESTRUCTION OF ARCHBISHOP BECKET'S SHRINE IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL—HENRY APPROPRIATES THE ENORMOUS TREASURE, AND HOLDS A MOCK TRIAL OVER BECKET'S BONES—WANTON WASTE OF CHURCH PROPERTY—HENRY STAKES A PEAL OF CHURCH BELLS AT DICE, AND LOSES THEM—SHAMEFUL DESTRUCTION OF THE VALUABLE LIBRARIES BELONGING TO THE MONASTERIES—INDIGNANT REMONSTRANCE OF FULLER AND BALE—THE ARGUMENTS OF THOSE WHO FAVOUR THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES CONSIDERED—REASONS WHY THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN REFORMED BUT NOT DESTROYED.

My last chapter closed with the mournful history of the fall of Glastonbury Abbey, and the murder of its venerable Abbot. You will now, I think, be glad to hear a short tale of a more cheerful kind, which Fuller has narrated with his accustomed humour. Whatever may be urged against monasteries, the princely hospitality of the abbots has, I think, never been questioned. "They kept," says Fuller, "most bountiful houses, especially at Christmas-tide. Whosoever brought the face of a man, brought with him a patent for his free welcome, till he pleased to depart. This was the method. Where he broke his fast, there he dined; where he dined, there he supped; where he supped, there he brake his fast again next morning; and so in a circle." To the idle objection, "that their hospitality was charity mistaken, promiscuously entertaining some who did not need, and more who did not deserve it," the same writer pointedly replies: "All this is confessed; yet by their hospitality many an honest and hungry soul had his bowels refreshed who otherwise would have been starved; and better it is two drones should be fed, than one bee famished. We see the heavens themselves, in dispensing the rain, often water many stinking bogs, and noisome lakes, which moisture is not needed by them (yea, they be the worse for it), only because much good ground lies inseparably intermingled with them; so that either the bad with the good must be watered, or the good with the bad must be parched away."*

When Henry was contemplating the suppression of the larger monasteries, honest-minded Englishmen, as we have seen, endeavoured to divert him from his purpose. Among other things, *the* unbounded liberality of the abbots was urged in their *defence*. Henry declared he would himself prove whether they

* Fuller.

were indeed true lovers of hospitality. I cannot do better than narrate the quaint story in Fuller's own words. "Henry VIII., hunting one day in Windsor Forest, struck down about dinner-time to the abbey of Reading, where, disguising himself (much for delight, more for discovery), he was invited to the Abbot's table, and passed for one of the King's guard—a place to which the proportions of his person might properly entitle him. A sirloin of beef was set before him, on which the King laid on lustily, not disgracing one of that place by whom he was mistaken. Well fare thy heart, quoth the Abbot, and here, in a cup of sack, I remember the health of his grace your master. I would give a hundred pounds on the condition that I could feed so heartily on beef as you do. Alas! my weak and squeasy stomach will hardly digest the wing of a small rabbit or chicken. The King pleasantly pledged him, and heartily thanking him for his good cheer, after dinner departed, as undiscovered as he came thither. Some weeks after, the Abbot was sent for, brought up to London, clapped in the Tower, kept close prisoner, fed for a short time on bread and water. Yet his body was not so empty of food, as his mind filled with fears, creating many suspicions to himself, when and how he had incurred the King's displeasure. At length a sirloin of beef was set before him, on which the Abbot fed, as the farmer on his grange, and verified the proverb that 'two hungry meals make the third a glutton.' In springs King Henry, out of a private lobby where he had placed himself, the invisible spectator of the Abbot's behaviour. My lord, quoth the King, presently deposit your hundred pounds of gold, or else no going hence all the days of your life. I have been your physician, to cure you of your squeasy stomach, and here, as I deserve, I demand my fee for the same. The Abbot down with his dust, and, glad he had escaped so, returned to Reading, as somewhat lighter in purse, so much more merry in heart than when he came thence."*


You will be sorry to hear that the Abbey of Reading where Henry had been so hospitably entertained shared the general overthrow. The brave old Abbot, following the example of Whiting at Glastonbury, refused to surrender to the King; he paid the penalty of his refusal with his life. His monks were dispersed abroad, and his monastery and abbey reduced to a heap of ruins.

It was at this juncture that Henry, in order to give a better colour to his proceedings, and to appease, if possible, the murmurs of discontent which reached him from all sides, determined to expose and put an end to what had really become

* Fuller, vol. ii., p. 192.

a great evil in the Church. I mean the abuses of pilgrimages, and the offerings at the shrines of saints. As I have before gone fully into this subject, I shall at once pass on and give you an account of Henry's remarkable proceedings. You have not forgotten, I hope, that Archbishop Becket's shrine in Canterbury Cathedral had for centuries been the grand centre of resort for devotees. Every year thousands of pilgrims flocked thither, not only from all parts of England, but from the remotest corners of Europe. The stately mausoleum, radiant with gold and jewels of prodigious value, had become a receptacle for untold wealth. At its foot, kings and emperors had paid reverent homage, leaving behind them gifts of inestimable value. Henry determined to appropriate this vast treasure, and destroy the costly shrine. It was a bold and startling proceeding; for Archbishop Becket had been for centuries England's honoured saint, and although many honest men had raised their voices against the follies and superstition which accompanied the Canterbury pilgrimages, Becket's name was still associated in the minds of the people with all that was holy and patriotic.

Henry, therefore, found it necessary to proceed with caution, and with some show of legal justice. The memory of the martyr of Canterbury was held up to public scorn and ridicule. The cause for which he had lived and died was pronounced an unholy cause. He was branded as bigoted, disloyal, and obstinate, and his memory loaded with opprobrium. I leave you to decide whether such accusations were just or not; for you have read the story of Thomas à Becket's chequered life, his manly resistance to Norman tyranny, his noble death. To a sovereign, like Henry, wholly bent on having his own will, and who had declared himself supreme over church and state, the character of such a man as Thomas à Becket would be peculiarly obnoxious; for he had not only contended successfully for the liberty of his church, but had defied the authority of his sovereign. Henry hated St. Thomas of Canterbury with a bitter hatred, and gloried over the demolition of his stately monument. A ridiculous farce was enacted over the martyr's shrine. A mock trial was held over his bones, which were afterwards rudely torn from their resting-place, and publicly burnt. Henry then seized the enormous wealth which past ages had devoted to the Primate's honour, commanded that from henceforth his name should be erased from the Church's calendar, and his memory no longer held in honour.

 In the reign of Henry VIII., and again in later times, sacrilegious violence swept over our lands, destroying far more

surely than time itself many of our most valuable and sacred relics. When we stand in Canterbury Cathedral, and gaze on the empty space where Archbishop Becket's shrine once stood, we may surely be excused if for a moment we deplore the total destruction of a monument which would have recalled to our minds scenes in the history of our church and country so full of deep and stirring interest.

The year 1539 was, indeed, an eventful one in our Church's history, for it witnessed the entire dissolution of all the monasteries of England. Every means had been employed by the unscrupulous Cromwell to induce the unfortunate abbots to surrender. Threat, bribery, and intimidation had done their work rapidly and surely, and Henry towards the end of the year found himself in the possession of the enormous yearly revenue of two millions of our present money.* I am sure you will agree with me, that the almost total waste of this vast treasure, which belonged of right to God, is one of the deepest blots on our English Reformation. Strype, a writer of the time, whose evidence on such points is trustworthy, as he strongly favours the King's proceedings, and approved of the dissolution of the monasteries, says that, "although the dissolving the religious houses was pretended (and he hopes, intended) for the public good, yet private men had most of the benefit; while the King and Commonwealth, the state of learning, and the condition of the poor were left as they were before, or worse."† To us it must ever be a matter of thankfulness that the leaders of the reform movement struggled manfully to stem the tide of evil and save the patrimony of the Church. Indeed Strype tells us that they were willing to brave the King's displeasure, rather than countenance his proceedings. "The King," he says, "took occasion to be displeased with the Archbishop and the Bishops of the 'new learning,' as they termed the Reformers, because they could not be brought to give their consent to parliament that the King should have all the monasteries suppressed, to his own sole use."‡ Unfortunately, however, Henry lent a too willing ear to the representations of his avaricious courtiers, who succeeded in keeping all honest churchmen at a distance, that they might freely share in the spoil. Cranmer had induced Henry to form a noble design. Nineteen new bishoprics were to have risen upon the ruins of the monasteries; but in a few short months the money which should have been expended on the good work was almost wholly dissipated; so that instead of nineteen bishoprics, only five new

* *Massingberd*, p. 305.

† *Strype's Memorials*.

‡ *Ibid.*

ones were afterwards erected—a number utterly inadequate to fill the enormous gap which the dispersion of the abbots and monks had made in the ranks of the ordained teachers of the Church. Sad tales have come down to us of the shameful manner in which Henry squandered the property he had thus unlawfully seized. The broad lands of the abbeys were bestowed on the profligate and unholy, who, for some paltry service done to the crown, had contrived to curry favour with their thoughtless monarch. “Not only all the cooks,” quaintly remarks Fuller, “but the meanest turnbroach in the King’s kitchen did lick his fingers; yea, the King’s servants of the third and fourth degree tasted of his liberality.” On one occasion, the profane monarch, who delighted in gambling, was beguiling the time at dice with Sir Miles Partridge. A noble peal of church bells near St. Paul’s in London, “as great and tuneable,” remarks Fuller, “as any in London,” was the stake. The King lost them in one cast; and the hallowed bells, which had called many a pious Christian to his daily devotion, became the property of a dissolute courtier. It is not for us to pass judgment on those to whom the property of the Church has descended; but it is a remarkable fact, that comparatively few have preserved to the present time the lands thus acquired. In one or two generations the greater part of such property was squandered and gone.

Whatever may be urged in favour of the dissolution of the monasteries, it is clear that the Almighty regards with no favourable eye the alienation of property dedicated to His service. The earnest expostulation of the inspired prophet Malachi cannot be gainsaid. “Will a man rob God? But ye say, wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation.”* In one respect, if in no other, all must own that our Church and country have suffered an irreparable loss in the destruction of our abbeys. For ages the monasteries of England had been the only receptacles for rare books and manuscripts. Valuable histories carefully compiled were preserved and handed down for the benefit of posterity in the library of the monastery; while hundreds of foreign books of extreme rarity and value had been from time to time added to these. To our country’s lasting disgrace, these noble books and manuscripts, instead of being removed, as they should have been, to the royal libraries or to the universities, became the prey of ignorant and unholy men. Utterly regardless of the loss their country must sustain by such wanton spoliation, these men sold

* Malachi iii. 8, 9.

the costly bindings of the volumes for what they could get, and converted the valuable contents into waste paper. While the world lasts, the injury which our literature has sustained by the wholesale destruction of such valuable relics can never be repaired. One short month served to undo for ever the patient, laborious work of ages. Fuller, who "owns he has no inclination whatever to favour monkery," indignantly exclaims against this sinful havoc. "Cruel cormorants, with their barbarous beaks and greedy claws, rent, tore, and tattered these inestimable pieces of antiquity. Many excellent authors, slipped out of their cases, were left naked, to be burned and thrown away. What soul can be so frozen as not to melt into anger thereat? What heart, having the least spark of ingenuity, is not hot at this indignity offered to literature?" This quaint but honest writer concludes his long indignant remonstrance with the following words of pointed reproof to those who would fain approve of the destruction of these valuable libraries. "I know," he says, "some back friends of learning there be that take it ill that we have 'jogged' them in this discourse, and therefore we will let them alone, to be settled quietly on the lees of their own ignorance, praying to God that never good library may lie at the mercy of their disposal, lest, having the same advantage, they play the like prank, to the prejudice of learning and religion."*

A few years later we find again one who was strongly averse to the monastic system joining in Fuller's lament. "I know," says John Bale, "at this time a merchantman who bought the contents of two noble libraries for forty shillings—a shame it is to be spoken. This stuff hath he occupied, instead of grey paper, for the space of more than ten years, and yet he hath store enough for as many years to come. A prodigious example is this, and to be abhorred of all men which love their nation as they should do. Yea, what can bring our realm to more shame and rebuke than to have it noised abroad that we are despisers of learning? I judge this to be true, and utter it with heaviness that neither the Britons under the Romans or Saxons, nor the English people under the Danes and Normans, had ever such damage of their learned manuscripts as we have seen in our time. Our posterity," he concludes, "may well curse this wicked fact of our age, this unreasonable spoil of England's noblest antiquities."†

This subject of the dissolution of the monasteries is so full of interest to all lovers of our Church's history, that I have

* *Fuller*, vol. iii., pages 247 to 249.

† *John Bale's Declaration upon Leland's Journal*, anno 1549.

perhaps dwelt longer on it than I ought to have done ; yet you must bear with me while I say a few words in conclusion.

So much has been at all times urged against the monasteries, and in favour of their dissolution, that I may be pardoned if I bring before you the other side of the argument, and venture to question some of the assertions of those who approve of the wholesale destruction of these ancient seats of piety and learning. First of all, we are told that the monasteries and the whole monkish system were so closely connected with the Church of Rome and her false teaching, that it was necessary the Reformed Church should be purged of these as well as of all other Romish abuses. But such an argument as this can only have weight with the most ignorant. I have shown you in this history how, centuries before the popes of Rome endeavoured to enslave our Church, or had added new or unscriptural doctrines to their faith, monasteries sprang up through the length and breadth of our land. Around these sacred spots was diffused a halo of religion and usefulness. From age to age, through seasons of utter darkness and desolation, the pious monks preserved God's Holy Word, and have handed down to posterity their valuable histories, without which we should now be almost wholly ignorant of many important events in the history of our Church and country. If our monasteries were part and parcel of the Romish system, so were our cathedrals and churches. Then, if this argument holds good, these ought surely to have shared the general destruction. While the services daily performed in these hallowed temples, the ancient creeds, the solemn litany, the soul-stirring *Te Deum*, should all have been expunged from our Prayer Book ; for the Roman Church still preserves them in her liturgy.

Secondly, the evil course of living of many of the monks is urged as an excuse for their dispersion and the destruction of all the monasteries. At first sight there seems some reason in such an argument, but, like the other, it will hardly bear the test of careful investigation. Suppose for a moment that the majority of the monks were leading lives which disgraced their sacred profession, and that their whole system had become corrupt, even this would have been no argument for its total destruction. The monasteries had in olden times kept alive true religion in the land. They had performed a great and useful work ; and had their system been reformed and modified to suit the requirements of later times, there is little doubt *that* the monks would once more have gone forth as true labourers in the Lord's harvest. One is surprised to find, however, *that* by far the greater number of the larger religious

houses, such as Glastonbury, Malvern, Boxgrove, &c., faithfully adhered to their ancient rules, and had long been blessings to the surrounding neighbourhoods. The evidence we have in proof of this is unanswerable. It is remarkable that the very commissioners appointed by Cromwell to inquire into the state of the monasteries and compel the surrender of the abbots were convinced, in spite of themselves, of the purity and usefulness of these houses, and actually pleaded in earnest words that they might be allowed to stand. One instance in proof of this will suffice. Gifford, one of the King's Commissioners, who visited the monastery of Wolstrobe, sent an earnest petition for its continuance. "The governor thereof," he says, "is a very good husband for the house, and well-beloved of all the inhabitants thereto adjoining; a right honest man, having right religious persons, being priests of right good conversation, and living religiously, having such qualities of virtue as we have not found the like in no place. For there is not one religious person there but that he can and doth use embroidering writing-books with a very fair hand, pointing and graffing. The house is without any slander of ill-fame, and standing in a wet ground, very solitary, keeping much hospitality. Such a number of poor inhabitants nigh thereto are daily relieved, that we have not seen the like, having no more land than they have. God be even my judge as I do write unto you the truth and none otherwise to my knowledge, which very pity alone causeth me to write."*

I ask, was it just that such religious houses as these should share in the condemnation of others which had ceased to do the Lord's work? The writer I have so often quoted puts much the same question. "Why," he says, "were those monasteries which were unexceptionable in their management, which were charitable to the poor and hospitable to the rich, why were these involved in the common fate and condemned to dissolution with the rest? How blind, of a truth, is human justice, which strikes without distinction, and sweeps away the innocent with the guilty."†

But, it may be urged, even those who were in favour of the monasteries acknowledged that the lives of many of the monks and friars would not bear the light of day, and that they had become an open disgrace to their sacred profession. All this I grant. But where will you find any large society, the members of which all act up to their rules? To argue for the destruction of an institution useful in itself, because some of its members are unholy, is surely most unsound reasoning;

* *Strype's Memorials.*

† *Collier, vol. v., p. 19.*

for it strikes at the root of all our national institutions, and would annihilate the Church of God itself, where the good and evil are mingled, and the tares are permitted to spring up among the wheat. Do not misunderstand what I am saying. While I believe the total destruction of the monastic system to have been a grievous error, I am strongly convinced that there was great need of a searching and entire reformation of it. What grounds have we for affirming that such reformation was impossible?

In conclusion, let me ask what have we as a nation gained by the ruin of these most useful and primitive institutions? If our people are more godly now than in days of yore, if our poor are better cared for, if churches abound, and our clergy are sufficient for the work, then may we well say, the monasteries with their zealous labourers are no longer needed. Alas! all must own that it is far otherwise. It is a mournful fact that ignorance, ungodliness, and infidelity abound among our lower classes. Thousands become an easy prey to the fanatic and deceiver, for God's Holy Word and the teaching of His Church are unknown to them. The English Church, robbed of her just possessions, can only offer to many of her clergy an income utterly disproportioned to the work they have to perform, while overwhelming is the business of the harvest and few are the labourers. Had our monastic system been cleansed of its corruptions at the Reformation, and its primitive usefulness restored, it would have supplied a void in our Church which, it is useless to deny, now exists. The monks, with their religious training and systematic discipline, would surely even now be invaluable assistants to our over-worked clergy, who are daily striving, against fearful odds, to stem the mass of iniquity and poverty which reign in our crowded cities.

A hard-working priest of our own day describes, in telling language, the work done by the religious orders of olden times. After showing how, in our own age, the parish priest has more work than he can well perform, and how numbers of his flock, either through ignorance or indifference, absent themselves from church, and that therefore it is "necessary the church should go to them," he asks, "How then did the Church of old meet the difficulty? She founded religious orders. She gathered together under one roof men of all ranks and grades, and trained them in self-denial and self-control, in the art of winning souls, in the art of preaching. Having educated them, she sent *them* forth, through the length and breadth of the land, to occupy the pulpits of the parish churches, or to stand up in the wayside hedge or on the steps of the market cross, and appeal

to those who would not come to the house of God to hear. Was there a savour of heresy in the wind ; north and south, east and west, flew these bare-footed, serge-frocked champions of orthodoxy, and in rude language, with arguments telling home and forcible, they taught the people the right, and prepared them to combat the wrong."

CHAPTER LVIII.

HENRY VIII. *continued.*—1540 to 1547.

PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION DURING THE LAST YEARS OF HENRY'S REIGN—COPIES OF THE BIBLE ORDERED TO BE PLACED IN CHURCHES, AND THE CLERGY COMMANDED TO INSTRUCT THEIR PEOPLE—HOW THE PEOPLE HAD IN OLDEN TIMES BEEN TAUGHT THE FAITH IN THEIR OWN TONGUE—HORN BOOKS AND PRYMERS—THE SCRIPTURES REPRINTED—THEIR DISTRIBUTION FULLY SANCTIONED BY THE HEADS OF THE CHURCH—BISHOP BONNER'S INSTRUCTIONS—THE CHURCH SERVICE—ITS HISTORY—USE OF SARUM—CRANMER DESIRES TO REFORM AND REMODEL IT, AND COMPLETE THE WORK WHICH WOLSEY HAD BEGUN—PARTS OF THE SERVICE PUT FORTH IN ENGLISH—THE REFORMED USE OF SALISBURY GENERALLY ADOPTED—HENRY ARRESTS THE FURTHER PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION BY ENFORCING THE SIX ARTICLES—CRANMER'S ENEMIES COMPASS HIS RUIN—HENRY'S CONSTANCY TO THE PRIMATE—INDIGNITIES OFFERED TO THE ARCHBISHOP—HENRY REMAINS FIRM TO HIM, AND REFUSES TO LISTEN TO THE INSINUATIONS OF THE PRIMATE'S ENEMIES—DEATH OF HENRY VIII.—HIS CHARACTER.

IN this chapter I propose giving you a short account of the progress of the Reformation during the last years of Henry's reign. Unhappily, the King's violent proceedings with regard to the monasteries tended to estrange the Romanists, and make them less disposed to favour a general reformation of the Church. "To see churches pulled down and rifled," remarks an old writer, "the plate swept off, the altar and the holy furniture converted to common use had no great air of devotion." Archbishop Cranmer was fully alive to all this, and would gladly, as we have seen, have stopped the work of destruction. But Henry, although he sincerely loved the Primate in his rough way, loved his own will better ; and so Cranmer's honest remonstrances fell to the ground. Up to this time the Reformation had proceeded but slowly. It is clear that Henry himself cared little for reform ; indeed, we have every reason to believe that he would have preferred allowing things to remain as they were. Yet God is often pleased to make use of unwilling instruments to effect His purpose. By his acts, Henry unwittingly advanced

the cause of the Reformation. He had encouraged his subjects to search into the matter, and by appealing to the learned foreigners with regard to his divorce, he had opened a communication with the reformers abroad, who gladly took advantage of the King's favour to come over to England.

In the year 1538, Henry had consented to sanction an English version of the Holy Scriptures. Each parish priest was to be provided with a copy of the sacred volume, which was chained to the desk, in order that the people might read and study it without removing it from the church. The following words, however, which I quote from a proclamation issued about this time by Henry, proves that God's Word, where it could be obtained, was recommended for private study also. "His highness is pleased and contented that such as can and will in the English tongue, shall and may quietly and reverently read the Bible and New Testament by themselves, at all times and places convenient for their instruction and edification, to increase thereby godliness and virtuous learning; and if they shall happen to find any doubt of any text or sentence in the reading thereof, to beware and take heed of their own presumptuous and arrogant exposition of the letter; but to resort humbly to such as be learned in the Holy Scripture, for their instruction in that behalf."* A wise caution surely, which it would be well for many in our own day to lay to heart.

It was further enjoined that on every Sunday and holiday the parson was to repeat a sentence out of the Lord's Prayer, or Creed, in English, until the people had learned the whole by heart. Although it is true that the main body of the people had, as a rule, become lamentably ignorant on these points, I would have you clearly understand that our English Church (whatever may be said of other European churches) had from the earliest ages endeavoured to guard against such ignorance. Many of our bishops, as I have shown you, enjoined their clergy to teach the people the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in their own tongue. As early as the tenth century, Alfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, enjoins his clergy "to speak the sense of the Gospel to the people in English, and of the Paternoster and of the Creed, as often as he can, for the inciting of the people to know their belief and retaining their Christianity." In the thirteenth century, you remember how Archbishop Peckham recommended his clergy to instruct their flocks carefully on these points; and in the reign of Edward I. the following remarkable injunction was issued by Thoresby, Archbishop of York, to his people. The passage

* Strype's Memorials.

occurs at the end of a series of instructions which he gave to his clergy. "All men I exhort to hear God's service every Sunday with reverence and devotion, say devoutly the Pater-noster, &c., and hear God's law taught in the mother tongue, for that *is better than to hear many masses.*" We read a great deal about the ignorance of people in early times, but it is necessary to bear in mind that they were ignorant because books were scarce, and not because the Church would fain keep knowledge from them; on the contrary, when we consider the slow and laborious process by which books were multiplied, we are surprised that our ancestors could have possessed so many, and not that they had so few. Had it not been for the pious labours of the monks, manuscript copies of the Bible, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer could never have been multiplied as they were. Ancient horn books are still preserved among us, which were once in the hands of the poor man, who, having been taught to read in the monastic school, could learn in his own tongue the sacred mysteries of the Christian faith. For those, again, who could afford the expensive luxury of a book, prymers, as they were called, were transcribed in Latin and English. These old English prymers contained "part of the Psalms, the Canticles, the Apostles' Creed, with a large number of prayers, anthems, and hymns."* So that you see our ancestors were by no means so ignorant of religion as we have been led to suppose.

In the year 1542, the Bible was reprinted into a larger volume, and a preface added by Archbishop Cranmer; so that this version of Holy Scripture went forth under the full sanction of the heads of our English Church. Bishop Bonner himself, who was in many respects a stanch Romanist, set up six of these Bibles in his cathedral of St. Paul's, affixing to the pillars the following admonition: "Before reading God's Word, I will that every man prepare himself with devotion and humility, that he may be better edified. I also will that all should forbear making expositions on it, or reading aloud, during time of Divine service or sermon; neither would I have great numbers assemble for this purpose, nor fall into disputes or clashing with each other. Should these rules not be observed, I shall be forced, *against my will*, to remove the occasion, and take the Bible out of the Church."†

Archbishop Cranmer by his pious exertions had been mainly instrumental in diffusing God's Holy Word throughout the length and breadth of the land. His earnest desire now, in common with the other bishops, was to reorganize the public

* Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

† Collier, and Strype's Memorials.

services of the Church. As the chief interest of our English Reformation hangs upon this most important point, it is necessary that I should bring before you, as briefly as possible, the different changes through which, from the earliest times, our church service passed, and why it was now considered expedient to alter it. From the earliest ages we find a set form of prayer was used in our churches. We find the British Christians possessed a distinctive Liturgy of their own; for when St. Augustine landed in England, he found, to his surprise, that although the Saxons were heathen, the small handful of Britons who survived worshipped God in a form of prayer, which had been handed down to them from apostolic times. Augustine, however, had been accustomed to a different system. The Roman Liturgy possessed in his eyes merit which no other form of prayer could possess, and he laboured with characteristic energy to introduce it into England. You remember how the British bishops resented this interference, and how they clung with true affection to their own customs and ancient form of prayer. The national feeling of the ancient British Church was strong; and years passed before anything like an uniform system of worship was established, the Saxon Christians, for the most part, adopting the Roman service, and the Britons adhering to their own. In the time of William the Conqueror, a vigorous attempt was made by Osmund, Bishop of Sarum, to establish an uniform system of Divine worship throughout England. He carefully collected together all the most ancient and scriptural of the prayers then in use; and the Sarum form of prayer, or "use," as it was called, became the chief liturgy of the Church of England, and was more popular than any other. "The Church of Salisbury," says a writer of the thirteenth century, "is conspicuous above all other churches, like the sun in the heavens, diffusing its light everywhere, and supplying their defects." As centuries passed by, the ancient form became corrupted by modern additions, which all honest-minded churchmen owned would be far better removed. Nearly all the bishops gladly seconded Cranmer in his scheme for restoring the Liturgy of the Church to its primitive state of simplicity. Before this time, however, attempts had been made to remodel the services of the Church. Cardinal Wolsey, by the King's sanction, issued a fresh edition of the Salisbury use, in which many important changes were made. The rubrics were *simplified*, Holy Scripture was directed to be read in order, *without omission*, and the lessons, which had been much shortened, *restored to their ancient length*.*

* Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

Up to this time, however, as I have told you, the greater part of the service was in Latin; so that the unlearned were unable to follow the service, although they were doubtless attracted and taught by the gorgeous ceremonial which accompanied it. A large portion of the service, including the Litany, the greater part of the Psalms, together with the Epistles and Gospels, was now translated into English. This was indeed a grand advance in the right direction, for the people could now, as St. Paul would have all men do, "pray with the spirit, and pray with the understanding also, and sing with the spirit, and sing with the understanding also."*

In the year 1541, another reformed edition of the Salisbury service was published, which was adopted throughout the whole province of Canterbury; so that now the English Church possessed a more uniform system of worship than it had had since the time of Augustine. As, however, still further alterations were deemed necessary, a committee of bishops was formed in 1542 to correct and reform all the various breviaries and books of prayer in use. At this juncture, Henry, with his usual caprice, took alarm, and listening to unwise counsellors determined to pass a law to prevent any further reformation. Six articles were put forth under the King's express sanction, which made binding on all many of the errors which the Church of Rome had introduced. Among other things, priests were forbidden to marry, and all who had wives were commanded to separate themselves from them. Archbishop Cranmer, in common with many other bishops, strenuously opposed these six articles, and in pain of incurring the King's displeasure, refused to vote for them. It was at this time that Henry's affection for the Primate was put to the test. Cranmer was himself a married man; and although he had dismissed his wife abroad to shield her from the storm, his enemies at court eagerly took advantage of his doubtful position to prejudice Henry against him. They craftily suggested that if others in a humble rank were punished for their obstinacy in resisting the articles, surely the Primate, to whom all looked for an example, should not be allowed to escape. Yet Henry, with all his inconstancy and want of principle, had never ceased to love and respect the gentle Archbishop, and with true nobleness of mind now refused to listen to the insinuations against him.

It was one of the lords in parliament who once said to Cranmer: "You, my lord, must have been born in a happy hour, for do or say what you will, the King will always take it well at your hands. I must needs confess," he honestly continued,

* 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

“that in some things I have complained of you to his majesty; but all in vain, for he will never give credit against you, whatsoever is laid to your charge. But let me or any other of the council be complained of, his grace will seriously chide and fall out with us, and, therefore, you are most happy if you can keep you in this state.”*

I have told you a great deal that is bad of Henry VIII., and, therefore, now that we are coming to the close of his life, it will be pleasant to dwell on a scene which proves that he was not wholly wanting in kindness and constancy of heart.

Henry, daily wearied with the complaints of those who had determined on the Primate's ruin, wisely resolved to sift the matter for himself, and allow Cranmer to speak in his own defence. Accordingly, one evening after supper he ordered his barge, and rowed to the Primate's palace at Lambeth. Cranmer, hearing of the King's approach, rose and came to the water's edge to bid him welcome. He was well aware of the hatred and activity of his enemies at court. Many he knew had been hurried to the block for a less offence than his. Even the sagacious Cromwell, who had enjoyed the King's full favour, and who had bowed to his least desire, had, not long ago, suffered on the scaffold a traitor's death. Cranmer knew that a storm was gathering, and as the King beckoned him into his barge, he prepared for the worst. But Henry really loved Cranmer, and as he gazed on his calm, reverend countenance, and listened to his honest defence, he wholly relented, and grasping the Primate's hand, assured him that, as long as he lived, the royal favour should never be withdrawn. But Cranmer's adversaries were still very powerful; they endeavoured to persuade the King that he held opinions which were false, heretical, and therefore illegal, and that it was necessary for the satisfaction of the people that he should undergo a trial. Henry, convinced in his own mind of Cranmer's integrity, urged him to submit with patience to this humiliation, that he might have an opportunity of publicly clearing himself. At the same time, he gave the Primate a ring (that he had long worn on his own finger), as an assurance of his regard and affection. “By this ring,” said the King, “your enemies shall well understand that I have taken your cause into my hands for them.”† The next morning a messenger came to Lambeth to summon the Archbishop to the Privy Council. At the door of the council chamber indignities were freely offered him, and he was rudely repulsed. Dr. Butts, the King's physician, who you remember had once honestly pleaded Wolsey's cause, hurried forward, and angrily com-

* Strype's Life of Cranmer.

† Ibid.

manded the Primate's persecutors to stand back. He hastened at once to the King's presence. "My liege," he indignantly exclaimed, "I have seen a strange sight to-day." "What is the matter?" said the King. "Sire," he rejoined, "there is a strange revolution in Archbishop Cranmer's quality. He is sunk from a metropolitan to a footman, for I have seen him wait among the liveries about an hour in the lobby before the council chamber." "What!" indignantly exclaimed Henry, "does the Privy Council treat the Primate of all England in such a contumelious manner? go at once, and command he be admitted without delay."

Cranmer, brought before his enemies, defended himself with earnestness; but when he found his accusers were determined to proceed yet further against him, he drew the King's ring from his finger, and holding it up, told them that Henry had solemnly promised to protect him in his hour of need. The King was true to his word. Boiling with indignation at the insults offered to his favourite, he summoned Cranmer's accusers into his presence, and roundly abused them in his own downright way. "Of a truth," exclaimed the angry monarch, "our Privy Council is strangely wanting in prudence and decency. How dare ye thus shut the Archbishop out of the council chamber, and let him stand in the passage like a valet or a slave among the waiting-men? would ye be so handled yourselves, think ye?" Then starting to his feet and scowling on his nobles, he angrily smote his breast, exclaiming, with an oath: "I tell ye, I am more obliged to Cranmer than any man living; no prince could have better proof of his integrity than I have had; therefore, let all who pretend any affection for me, or my service, treat the Archbishop with all imaginable regard." Then with a look which left the abased ministers in no doubt that he intended his will should be law, he loudly exclaimed: "I will not suffer Cranmer, nor any person I have a value for, to be thus harassed and run the risk for clearing their reputation. Marry! unless ye put down your misunderstandings, I shall be forced to interpose and quiet them myself." The offending nobles, well aware that their arbitrary sovereign was not the man to rest satisfied with mere threats, hastily withdrew from his presence, thankful to have escaped so easily. Stifling their feelings of jealousy and mortification, they saluted the Primate as they passed with the customary marks of ceremony and good-will.

Cranmer had successfully weathered the storm, and was now *higher in the King's favour than ever*. Henry trusted and *loved the Primate*, and, as he lay on his death-bed, he sent for

Cranmer to hear his dying confession. The Archbishop hurried at once to Westminster, but on his arrival found the King speechless. Throwing himself on his knees by the bedside of the dying man, he besought him to trust in God's mercy through Christ, and if possible to grant him some sign, whereby he could be assured of this. Henry clutched eagerly at the Archbishop's hand, pressed it, and expired.*

With all his faults, Henry VIII. possessed by nature many noble and sterling qualities; but his eventful history affords us a melancholy instance of the power our evil passions may gain over us, if unsubdued at the outset. Cruelty, profligacy, and self-will well-nigh overpowered Henry's natural generosity and kindness of heart; yet these qualities flash out at times like bright gleams of sunlight in a dark sky, redeeming this King's character from being wholly worthless. In conclusion, remember the two great events which render the reign of Henry VIII. so important a one in our church's history—the final separation of the English Church from the see of Rome, and the entire suppression and destruction of all her ancient monasteries.

* Strype.

CHAPTER LIX.

EDWARD VI.—1547 to 1549.

WISDOM OF HENRY VIII. WITH REGARD TO THE EDUCATION OF HIS SON—ADVANCES THAT HAD BEEN MADE IN THE REFORMATION DURING THE REIGN OF HENRY—CRANMER PROCURES THE REPEAL OF THE SIX ARTICLES—DIFFICULTIES WHICH STILL BESET THE REFORMERS—CHARACTER OF THE PROTECTOR SOMERSET—HIS WANTON SPOLIATION OF THE CHURCH—THE COURTIERS FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE—REMONSTRANCE OF BUCER, THE GERMAN REFORMER—LATIMER PREACHES AGAINST THE SACRILEGE OF THE NOBLES—VIOLENCE OF MANY OF THE REFORMERS—IN WHAT RESPECTS OUR ENGLISH REFORMATION DIFFERS FROM THE REFORMATION ABROAD—CALVIN, THE SWISS REFORMER—HIS FOLLOWERS FALL INTO EXTREMES—THEY DESIRE TO RECONSTRUCT A CHURCH ON THEIR OWN MODEL, AVOIDING NOT ONLY THE ERRORS OF ROME, BUT ALSO MANY USAGES THAT WERE SCRIPTURAL AND PRIMITIVE—WISDOM AND MODERATION OF OUR ENGLISH REFORMERS—THEY CHOOSE A MIDDLE COURSE, AVOIDING THE SUPERSTITION OF ROME ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE EXTREMES OF CALVINISM ON THE OTHER—ADVANCE OF THE REFORMATION—HOMILIES COMPOSED—FORMATION OF THE FIRST REFORMED PRAYER BOOK—BISHOP GARDINER APPROVES OF THE SERVICE FOR HOLY COMMUNION—COMPOSITION OF OUR BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER—CRANMER DECLINES THE ASSISTANCE OF THE FOREIGN REFORMERS—THE REFORMED PRAYER BOOK IS ORDERED TO BE USED IN ALL THE CHURCHES—ITS GENERAL ADOPTION ON WHIT-SUNDAY, 1549.

IN one respect Henry VIII. certainly showed his wisdom and good sense. The tutors he had chosen for his only son were men of undoubted piety and learning; and the young prince soon gave proof that he had profited by their instructions.

Edward VI. had not completed his tenth year on the death of his father, but his gentle temper and simple piety had already endeared him to the people, so that his accession was hailed with general satisfaction. The Primate Cranmer, who was the young king's godfather, had most cause of all men to look forward with hopefulness to the future. Early taught to regard with favour the reforming party in the Church, the young prince lent a willing ear to the suggestions of Cranmer, who earnestly sought to bias him in favour of a moderate and scriptural reform. You have seen that during Henry's reign considerable advances had been made towards such a reformation. The Church of England had asserted her ancient independence, having renounced all allegiance to the Bishop of Rome. The Bible had been translated into the common language of the people, and was declared to be the "only touchstone of true learning."* The litany and portions of the service had been translated and published together, with many forms of private prayer, "in order, as it is said, that all such as are ignorant of foreign speech may have what to pray in their

* Cranmer's Works.

own familiar language, with fruit and understanding.”* Several superstitious ceremonies had been exposed and put a stop to, while commissioners had been appointed to alter the church service. It is true, a good deal of the old system still prevailed, but the heads of the Church had sanctioned these changes, and public feeling had as yet been in favour of them.†

Cranmer, aware that a good deal yet remained to be done, at once “put his shoulder to the wheel.” His first act was to procure the repeal of the six articles, which I told you had effectually stopped the work of the Reformers at the end of the last reign. You must not, however, suppose that the Primate’s course was an easy one. He had still great difficulties to surmount. Apart from the opposition of some of the less moderate Romanists, the unworthy conduct of many of the so-called “Reformers” greatly hindered the work. Young Edward, though well disposed, was but a child, and as yet unable to hold the reins of government. Edward Seymour, the King’s uncle, who had been created Duke of Somerset, was Protector of the realm. It is true this nobleman professed to favour the Reformation; but we shall see that his conduct proved rather a hindrance than a help to the cause. Somerset was a man of courage, and his manners were gentle and conciliatory; but, like so many of us, he contrived to deceive himself. By zealously opposing Romanism, he imagined he was practising true religion. To plunder a Church which had become corrupt, and, as he believed, well-nigh useless, was in his opinion no sin. Yet Somerset failed to perceive that while he was enriching himself by acts of wanton sacrilege he was incurring God’s anger and bringing reproach on the cause he professed to advocate. Many acts of wanton spoliation cast a shadow over Somerset’s brief reign of splendour and popularity. On one occasion he determined to build a palace which should be worthy of the Protector of England, and uncle of the King. To make room for the gorgeous structure, he pulled down the houses belonging to the Bishops of Worcester, Lichfield, and Llandaff, together with a parish church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. The work thus founded in robbery and wrong proceeded slowly. The magnificent design which Somerset had planned required yet more materials, and the workmen were at a standstill. The Protector had already defied God’s anger and popular indignation; and so he now determined to carry out to the full his sacrilegious scheme. The order went forth. The ancient church of *St. Margaret’s* at Westminster was to be demolished; and in

* Injunction to Prymer, 1545.

† Liturgies of Edward VI. compared.

order to conciliate the parishioners, the nave of the abbey church was offered them for Divine service. But, to their honour be it said, they indignantly refused the offer, and resolved to protect their own church from spoliation. Their forefathers had for ages worshipped within its sacred walls, and they now determined to defend it, as they would have defended their own lives or property. The workmen, with their hammers, pickaxes, and scaffolds, approached the church ; but a large body of stalwart citizens had ranged themselves in front of the porch. They were the parishioners of St. Margaret's, who, with drawn swords and menacing gestures, defied the builders to touch a stone of the sacred edifice. The affrighted workmen fled, and Somerset's profane intention was balked. Yet he still persisted in his scheme ; and although foiled in his attempt on St. Margaret's, he succeeded in demolishing a stately cloister at St. Paul's, with two chapels belonging to it, and ended in blowing up the church of St. John's, near Smithfield, with gunpowder, the stone of which was carried off to his new palace in the Strand.* Unhappily, Somerset's example was followed by many others. Lawless and dissolute courtiers who lacked the patriotism which certainly distinguished the Protector, followed his example in this respect, and eagerly appropriated the patrimony of the Church. Those who argue that anything that is liable to abuse becomes useless, may be disposed to say these churches had been dishonoured by superstitious and unholy practices, and therefore their destruction is not to be regretted. The honest German Reformer Bucer, of whom I shall have to speak hereafter, thought otherwise ; yet he hated the superstitions and errors of Rome with a cordial hatred, and would fain have carried the Reformation in England to the most extreme point. After dwelling with indignation on the sacrilege practised by the English nobles, he adds : "What commonwealth was ever so barbarous and wicked as not to make a distinction between private and public property, and those things which are dedicated to the maintenance of religion ? These last even heathens look upon as the property of the Supreme Being. For this reason they are accounted sacred, and above the claims of any mortal ; and if the state was so far pressed as to make use of them, they looked upon the money as no otherwise than borrowed, and always took care to restore it when the difficulty was over ; for they believed it part of the law of nature, that no government

* It was Somerset who established at Glastonbury a colony of French Protestant refugees, and permitted them to follow their trade of weavers *within the sacred precincts* of the abbey church, which he converted into *a worsted manufactory*.

could make seizure of what belonged to the gods upon any pretence whatever. Thus whoever made bold with anything consecrated to religious uses was charged with sacrilege, and punished with more severity than if he had robbed the commonwealth. Of a truth," he concludes, "the honour of our Saviour and the interests of Christianity suffer extremely by these invasions on the Church."* This same Reformer also says in another place: "It is an old saying that nobody can grow rich by the stealing and taking away of private people's possessions, much less by robbing of the public. What sense, therefore, hath he of God that thinks his riches shall increase to good purpose that commits sacrilege and robs the Church of what belongs to it? But it is objected that the Church hath too much, and may spend it in luxury; the churchmen are idle, and bring no profit to the commonwealth. Let these divines, therefore," he says, "be removed from the hives of the Church, but let not the 'pains'† of the bees be eaten up."‡

Bishop Latimer also, who boldly proclaimed the truth both to king and peasant, exposed the conduct of these grasping courtiers before the King himself. In one of his sermons preached at court, he thus speaks: "The holy revenues are seized by the rich laity; many benefices are let out to farm by secular men, or else given to their servants as a consideration for keeping their hounds, hawks, and horses; while the poor clergy are reduced to such short allowance that they are forced to go to service, to turn clerks of the kitchen, surveyors, receivers, &c. Thus God is dishonoured in His ministers, the Church disserved, and religion disgraced."§ I forbear giving you the testimony of the Romanist party on such points as these, because their prejudices in favour of the old state of things might lead them to make exaggerated statements, or at least we might be disposed to doubt their truth. But when we find men like Martin Bucer and Latimer, who were disposed to carry reformation to its most extreme limit, and who were by no means disposed to take an exalted view of the sanctity of the Church, indignantly remonstrating against such wholesale destruction, we may be sure that the evil had risen to an alarming height.

One extreme most surely begets another. Because the Roman Church had taught men to pay an undue devotion to the saints, and to kneel in adoration at their shrines, so now, as in the former reign, there were many who, fired with a sinful fanaticism, dared openly to profane not only the shrines of the saints, *but the holy altar and the blessed Eucharist itself.* Many

* Collier, vol. v., p. 411.

† Strype's Life of Cranmer.

‡ Labour.

§ Stow's Annals.

ancient and beautiful works of art were destroyed at this time, these misguided fanatics blindly imagining that a painted window or carved niche was sufficient to keep alive the old superstitions. The most violent opinions of the Lollard preachers were once more revived. It was boldly asserted "that priests have no more authority to minister sacraments than laymen have;" that all "Church ceremonies that are not clearly expressed in Scripture must be taken away, because they are men's inventions. That a man hath no free will. That it is not necessary or profitable to have any church or chapel to pray in, or do any Divine service in; that the rich and costly ornaments in the church are rather high displeasure than pleasure or honour to God; and that the stole about the priest's neck is nothing else but the Bishop of Rome's rope."*

Such were a few of the foolish and unscriptural notions which prevailed at this time, and will even find supporters in our own day. Happily, the law made examples of some of the most violent of these fanatics; but there was still a large class of men who, while they disapproved of such excesses, were by no means satisfied with the wise and moderate course of reform which Cranmer and his party proposed to adopt; for they regarded it as no Reformation at all, but only another form of Romanism. These zealous reformers had by this time become a very important and prominent party in the Church; therefore it is necessary that I should say a few words with respect to their origin. The peculiar views they adopted were imported from abroad, where the Reformation had proceeded with more zeal, perhaps, but with less wisdom than in England. Our English Reformation, as I have already told you, differed in many respects from the Reformation abroad. In our own country, the changes, both in doctrine and practice, were made, not by laymen only, but also by the bishops and clergy, the heads of the Church itself. On the other hand, the Reformation on the Continent was conducted chiefly by laymen, and by men who, in their anxiety to escape from the errors of Rome, destroyed instead of restoring what was scriptural and primitive, thereby causing, in many instances, sad division in God's household. The foreign reformers themselves differed widely on many important points, and carried on their arguments with great animosity. Even Martin Luther, with all his zeal, was regarded by some as a mere lukewarm opponent of Romanism, a man who still clung to many of the old errors. Calvin, a hot-headed

* Strype's Ecclesiastical Memorials. The testimony of this writer on such points is worthy of all attention, for his opinions are strictly "Protestant."

yet honest Swiss reformer, became the leader of a large and influential party in the Reformed Church; yet he held opinions which Luther condemned as strongly as the errors of Rome. Calvin was a layman. He had never received Holy Orders; he was neither deacon nor priest; yet he preached publicly and taught the people as their lawfully-ordained pastor. In this respect, therefore, if in no other, he was breaking the laws both of Scripture and the early Church. Hundreds, attracted by his earnestness and eloquence, joined themselves to him, and, regardless of the schism they were causing in Christendom, set themselves up as a distinct sect, professing to hold the pure doctrines of Christ's gospel. The doctrines of Calvin were not confined to Switzerland alone; they spread rapidly all over Europe; and hundreds in England, who were in favour of a sweeping reform, professed themselves his followers. I have shown you how, in the case of Wiclif, his disciples adopted opinions far more extreme and violent than their leader. It was so in the case of Calvin.* The Swiss Reformer would fain have retained certain usages that he believed to be good, although the Roman Church, in common with other Churches, had always used them. Among other things, he approved of a set form of prayer; but his disciples, fired with a zeal "not according to knowledge," desired to abolish forms of prayer and all ceremonies, although the Church Universal had held such to be true and scriptural. The Church of Rome retained them, and therefore they were to be condemned as dangerous snares.

These earnest but misguided men preferred constructing a Church system of their own, which should not only exclude all decent ceremonial, but duly-ordained bishops and teachers also. We in England have every reason to be thankful that we were spared such a reformation, or rather such an overthrow, as this; but I shall have to show you in what way the Calvinists influenced the work of our English reformers. Archbishop Cranmer found that he had undertaken no easy task, when he afterwards endeavoured, with his usual love of peace, to conciliate these extreme Protestants or Calvinists. The Primate had lived through a period of suffering and destruction. The monasteries had been suppressed, and their enormous staff of clergy dispersed. Irreligion, disorder, and fanaticism seemed for a time to have taken the place of the old system, and Cranmer

* Calvin's followers held notions which in many important respects resembled those of the Lollards. Their doctrines are kept alive in our own time among Protestant sects of dissenters, and were even adopted, though with great inconsistency, by some members of our Church, for they are clearly opposed to her teaching.

now longed to save from the wreck all that was really Catholic and primitive, and to restore, but not to destroy, that Church which the Apostles and early teachers had so faithfully laboured to plant in England. Difficulties which seemed well-nigh overwhelming assailed the reformers from both sides. The Romanists, on the one hand, though in favour of a separation from Rome, would fain have allowed many of the customs to remain as they were; while the Protestants or Calvinists were eager to discard not only what was clearly erroneous, but also a great deal that was true and ancient. Happily, Cranmer and the bishops held firmly to a middle course, and wisely and deliberately proceeded with their work.

Shortly after the accession of Edward VI., a visitation of all the dioceses of England had been set on foot, and certain laws were passed, which were made binding on all the clergy, one or two of which I will give you. All parish priests were ordered to preach four times a year against the papal supremacy, and to dissuade the people from pilgrimages or praying to images. The images at first were allowed to remain in the churches; but the people were to be admonished that they were only placed there for instruction and to remind them of the virtues of the saints. No candles were to be burnt before the images, but two were to be placed on the high altar and lighted during the celebration of "Mass" or Holy Communion, to signify that "Christ is the very Light of the world."

The Litany was to be distinctly chanted in the English tongue; God's Word was to be duly taught, and the people encouraged to read and study it themselves. The Lord's Day was to be wholly spent in religious service—in hearing the Word of God, in public and private prayer, in confession of sins to God, and in receiving the Holy Communion and visiting the sick. Again, on some of the saints' days, which had hitherto been most strictly observed, the people were permitted to follow their usual occupations.*

It was at this time that Archbishop Cranmer, aided chiefly by Bishop Ridley, composed a book of homilies or sermons. These homilies were to be read by the clergy in their churches, that the people might be fully instructed in different points of religious doctrine and practice. Yet, although the Reformation had advanced thus far, one thing, and that a most important one, was yet lacking. There was no complete general form of public prayer put forth in English, so that although, as we have seen, portions of the service had been translated, a *united system of public worship*, whereby all might join in prayer and

* Collier, vol. v., p. 199.

praise, was not yet established. In the year 1549 this great work was accomplished, with the universal consent of the English bishops and clergy.

The history of the reconstruction of our Book of Common Prayer is full of deep interest. I need hardly remind you that our present Prayer Book is no modern invention, nor is it a series of petitions hastily put together; but, on the contrary, a collection of the noblest and most ancient hymns and prayers which our pious forefathers have handed down to us from apostolic times. Dear must such a book be to every true-hearted Englishman, uniting him with all other members of God's household in one common brotherhood of worship, and linking him with ties the most sacred to the past history of His Church. I am sorry I have only space to give you a short sketch of the formation of this Book of Common Prayer, which, with the exception of a few alterations and additions, which were afterwards made, is the same as that book with which you are all so familiar. I would have you bear in mind that our prayer-book, as it was constructed in the year 1549, was the first prayer-book of Edward VI. The alterations, of which I shall have to speak by-and-by, were not made till the year 1552. Before entering upon the subject, I should mention that an English service for Holy Communion, which you know is the most solemn and sacred portion of our Church service, had already been put forth, and was generally adopted throughout the kingdom. Moderate Romanists were well satisfied with this reformed service, which in many respects resembled the Sarum use, to which they had long been accustomed; and it was now unanimously agreed that all the public services should be remodelled in the same true and Catholic spirit. The words of Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, with regard to this subject, are well worthy of note. In a letter to Cranmer, he thus speaks of the reformed service for Holy Communion: "This holy mystery in the Book of Common Prayer is well termed, and not distant from the Catholic faith, in my judgment." The principles which actuated Cranmer and the rest of the bishops in their work were true and noble ones. With praiseworthy humility, they forebore to construct a set of prayers of their own, but preserved those ancient ones which had stood the test of ages, and had received the sanction of the universal Church. They determined to restore the ancient liturgy to its original purity, and to alter nothing for the sake of novelty. "Their business," *aptly* remarks the writer I have before quoted, "was only to brighten what had been rusted by time; to discharge the innovations of later ages, and bring things up to the primitive stan-

dard.”* It was this very reason that made Archbishop Cranmer hesitate to accept the aid of the leading foreign reformers in the formation of the new Prayer Book. They had watched with great interest the work of the Reformation in England, and now showed every readiness to give their advice and assistance. But Cranmer and the bishops, after some deliberation, declined their offer. They were well aware that, in many important points, the followers of Calvin could have no sympathy with them, for the principles on which they proposed to act could never satisfy those hot-headed Protestants.

The *first* prayer-book of Edward VI. was therefore essentially an *English* prayer-book, and one strictly founded on the primitive model. The reformed Use of Salisbury, the history of which I have already given you, was made the foundation of the new Liturgy, but the Use of York, and other ancient prayer-books, were also carefully studied, and selections made from them.†

The plan on which the bishops proceeded was this: An order for morning and evening prayer was to be arranged, together with a form for administering the sacraments, and for the celebration of all other public offices, “That all varieties of worship might be laid aside, and one uniform office provided for the whole kingdom.”

Up to this time it had been customary to have no less than eight separate services in the churches. It may interest you to know what these were.

Matins, a service before daybreak.

Lauds, a service at daybreak, following quickly on to Matins.

Prime, a later morning service, about six o'clock.

Tierce, a service at nine.

Sexts, a service at noon.

Nones, a service at three in the afternoon.

Vespers, an evening service.

Compline, a late service at bedtime.

That these separate services had many of them been joined together proves that their numbers had been found inconvenient; but the accumulation of them caused considerable repetition in the prayers, many of them being introduced into all the eight services.‡ It was this inconvenience that the Reformers now desired to obviate. They established two services during the day—Matins and Evensong; and by thus condensing the services, the repetition only took place at these distant hours. By these means they kept alive the spirit and general purpose of the ancient Church instead of destroying

* Collier.

† Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

‡ Ibid.
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them ; so that the new prayer-book was merely the old one under another form. It was with much deliberation and fervent prayer that the Primate and bishops compiled this noble service book, which is to us indeed a valuable inheritance. The close of the year 1549 witnessed its completion. An Act was passed called the Act of Uniformity, which required all the bishops and clergy to adopt this form, and none other. "By the aid of the Holy Spirit," it was then stated, "the bishops and other learned men have agreed upon one uniform order of Divine Worship, having respect to the pure religion of Christ, taught in Holy Scripture, and to the practice of the primitive Church." It is therefore enacted that from the feast of Whit Sunday then next, all divine offices shall be performed according to it. The day chosen evidently had reference to the pious belief of the reformers, that God the Holy Ghost had blessed their work. "So solemn," remarks a modern writer, "were the views which those who arranged and set forth the Prayer Book took of their work ; so anxious their desire that it should be sealed with the blessing of God."

On Whit Sunday, June 10th, 1549, a grand and stirring ceremony might have been witnessed. In the cathedral of St. Paul's, and in many other ancient cathedrals and churches, an earnest throng of worshippers was gathered together, joining with heart and voice in the ancient prayers of the Church ; the spirit and meaning of the petitions which their forefathers had used restored in all their pure and majestic dignity.

CHAPTER LX.

EDWARD VI. *continued.*—1549 to 1553.

THE REFORMED LITURGY MEETS WITH GENERAL APPROVAL—MARTIN BUCER AND BISHOP GARDINER'S OPINION OF IT—VALUE OF A GENERAL FORM OF PRAYER—CRANMER INVITES SOME OF THE FOREIGN REFORMERS OVER TO ENGLAND, DESIRING, IF POSSIBLE, TO UNITE WITH THEM—CONSEQUENCES OF THIS STEP—BUCER AND PETER MARTYR—THEIR OPINIONS CONSIDERED—JOHN ALASCO, A POLISH REFUGEE, ESTABLISHES AN INDEPENDENT SECT IN LONDON—THE GERMAN REFORMERS OBTAIN FIRM FOOTING IN ENGLAND—JOHN HOOPER, A ZEALOUS CALVINIST, REFUSES TO WEAR THE EPISCOPAL VESTMENTS AT HIS CONSECRATION—ARCHBISHOP CRANMER, TOGETHER WITH BUCER AND PETER MARTYR, ENDEAVOURS TO INDUCE HOOPER TO CONCEDE THE POINT, BUT IN VAIN—OPINIONS OF THE CALVINISTS WITH REGARD TO THE CHURCH SERVICE—A FRESH REVISION OF THE PRAYER BOOK IS INSISTED ON BY THE KING, WHO CONCURS IN THE OBJECTIONS OF THE CALVINISTS—SOME OF THE CHANGES MADE IN THE REVISION OF 1552—THE EXTREME REFORMERS OBJECT TO THE REVERENT PRACTICE OF KNEELING AT HOLY COMMUNION—CRANMER'S HONEST REMONSTRANCE—THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION ARE DRAWN UP—DEATH OF EDWARD VI.—THE FORMATION OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER THE LEADING EVENT OF HIS REIGN—EDWARD'S CHARACTER AND OPINIONS CONSIDERED—HIS PIETY AND SIMPLE FAITH—ANECDOTES OF HIS EARLY LOVE FOR RELIGION—HIS LAST PRAYER—WHAT IS THE IMPORTANT TRUTH WE LEARN FROM THE HISTORY OF OUR ENGLISH CHURCH—CONCLUSION.

To the Primate and the rest of the bishops who had compiled the new Service Book, it must have been a matter for deep thankfulness that it now met with such general approval. The spirit of humility and moderation in which they had acted had found its reward; for not only the moderate English Romanists approved of the changes that had been made, but the more sober-minded among the Protestants also. It is satisfactory that the leaders of both these parties clearly expressed their opinion with regard to the new Service Book, and both opinions were favourable to it. Martin Bucer, who may fairly be considered a chief among the leaders of the Protestant party, thus speaks of the reformed Liturgy: "I thank God that He hath inclined the officers of the Church to reform the ceremonies to this degree of purity, for I find nothing in them *that is not taken out of the Word of God*, or at least not repugnant to it, being fitly taken." Having carefully, as he says, perused the book, he delivers his final judgment in the following words: "In the description of the Communion and daily prayers, I see nothing enjoined in the book but which is agreeable to the Word of God, either in word, as the Psalms and Lessons, or in sense, as the Collects. The manner of the Lessons and Prayers, and the *times of using them*, are constituted very agreeable both to God's

Word, and the observation of the ancient churches. Therefore the book ought to be retained and vindicated with the greatest strictness.”* On the other hand, Bishop Gardiner, who may fairly be said to represent the Romanist party, thus speaks of the reformed Liturgy in his official reply to the Privy Council: “I have,” he says, “deliberately considered all the offices contained in the Common Prayer Book, and all the several branches of it; and although I could not have made it in that manner, had the matter been referred to me, yet I find such things therein as do well satisfy my conscience, and therefore I will not only execute it in my own person, but cause the same to be officiated by all those of my diocese.”

Do not these words of Bishop Gardiner refute that assertion of our modern Romanists which would have us believe that our Book of Common Prayer went forth solely by Act of Parliament, without the sanction of the bishops and clergy of the Church? These honest words of Gardiner and Bucer convey to us another thought full of interest. I mean the inestimable value of a set form of prayer. In some few points, Gardiner and Bucer may have wished the Service Book to have been otherwise worded; but, as a whole, they believed it to have been compiled on a true and scriptural principle, and consented to adopt it in common with the rest of their countrymen.

Those who, in our own day, would raise trivial objections to our ancient form of prayer, and for the sake of their private scruples cause division in the Church by refusing to adopt it, may well take example from the conduct of the Romanist Bishop of Winchester and the Protestant Bucer on this occasion.

From all I have said of Archbishop Cranmer, you will have seen that he acted earnestly and conscientiously, and contrived to steer the Church's bark safely through a period of extreme danger and difficulty. But the Primate, like all other men, had his failings. His judgment at times was in fault, and he was wanting in firmness, decision, and forethought. Yet I believe his sole aim was to further the interests of his Church and country, and that when he erred, it was from over-eagerness to do what he considered charitable and right.

At this juncture, events occurred which have left their stamp on the history of our English Church. Several of the leading reformers abroad, who had watched the formation of our new Prayer Book with considerable interest, were invited over to England by Cranmer, with the full sanction of the young King. Indeed, it is most probable that Edward especially urged Cranmer to take this step; for on most points his sympathies

* Strype's Life of Cranmer.

were with the Calvinist party. It was a noble project that Archbishop Cranmer had conceived. A man of peace, he hated division and strife, and had contrived by his moderation to secure unity at home. The reformers abroad, and the reformers in England, had been fighting up to a certain point in the same cause; and why, argued the peace-loving Primate, should they not be united in one common brotherhood? Had these men been actuated by the same liberal and charitable spirit as the Archbishop, all might have been well. Unhappily, it proved otherwise; and the result was anything but what Cranmer could have wished or expected. The concessions which he was afterwards induced to make failed to conciliate the Protestant and Calvinist party, while they alienated the moderate Romanists, who had hitherto, it must be owned, raised but few objections. The foreign reformers who headed the Calvinist party in England were Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr. The former, who was a man of considerable piety, had been made by the King professor of divinity at Cambridge, and had obtained by his learning and eloquence a wide influence. In many respects Bucer was a far more moderate man than his followers. He was fully alive to the importance of unity, and deplored the divisions that existed among his countrymen. He even went so far as to pray that England might be preserved from the like errors. He firmly believed in the divinely-appointed order of bishops; and did not hesitate to affirm that the opposition raised against a regularly-ordained ministry was a device of Satan to destroy the Church.

Peter Martyr, his companion, was a man of more extreme opinions; and when on one occasion he preached on the subject of the Holy Eucharist in no very reverent terms, Bucer openly rebuked him. "Ye know," said he, "how unfortunate such disputes about the Sacrament have proved in Germany; how they have weakened veneration for the holy mysteries, made people break out into animosities and parties, and exposed religion to contempt."*

About this time it happened that John Alasco, a Polish gentleman, preached the peculiar doctrines of Calvin with such vigour and earnestness abroad, that he drew down the wrath of the Roman Catholic bishops, and fled for refuge to England. His fervour and zeal attracted the attention of the Protector Somerset, who, having professed himself a favourer of Calvinism, determined to afford Alasco countenance and protection. The Primate also gave him a kindly welcome; although it is impossible to believe that he could have had much real sympathy

* Collier.

with a man who differed from him on so many important points. Cranmer's earnest desire for union, and his charitable disposition, will best account for his apparently inconsistent conduct on this occasion. Emboldened by the favourable impression he had made, Alasco made a startling request. Having little sympathy with the reformed Church of England, which he was pleased to consider still in grievous error, he begged that a church might be assigned to him and his followers, where they could carry out their own form of worship independently of the bishops and clergy of the Church. The King and Council, blind to the consequences, sent a favourable answer to Alasco; and in a short time a separate body of worshippers was established in London, of whom the Polish gentleman was made superintendent and preacher. To Englishmen, who had hitherto known no other teaching than that of their own divinely-appointed Church, the sight must have been strange of a body of men who worshipped under a system of their own invention, and who regarded the sacred ordinances of religion as little better than Romish superstitions. You will not be surprised to hear that these men, who were so eager to be loosed from all lawful obedience to spiritual governors, soon began to quarrel among themselves, and divide into opposite parties. This unhappy schism must have risen to a great height, for we find Peter Martyr (who of all men would have been most disposed to deal leniently with the offenders) lamenting the fact, in a letter addressed to his friend Bucer. "The minds of these men," he says, "are so *implacable to one another* that they are fain to refer their differences to the Privy Council to make an end of."*

Does not this story show us that dissent from the doctrine and discipline of our own scriptural and Apostolic Church must ever lead to more hopeless schisms?

Schism, or division, was clearly regarded by St. Paul as no light transgression. "I beseech you, brethren," he says, "mark those which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."† The German reformers, therefore, with their peculiar views and aversion to primitive doctrine and practice, obtained a firm footing in England, influencing a large body of her people—an influence which has extended to our own day.

One of the most zealous partizans of Alasco in England was

* This fact cannot be questioned, for Strype, who is my authority for it, strongly favoured the establishment of this schismatical body of foreigners in England.

† Romans xvi. 17, 18.

John Hooper, who, about this time, was nominated to the See of Gloucester by the King, who showed a growing favour towards the extreme reformers.

During the reign of Henry VIII., Hooper, who was well known as a zealous, uncompromising reformer, and a stanch hater of Romanism, fled to Switzerland; for, in common with many others, he found himself in danger from the six articles. He there became acquainted with some of the leading Calvinists, and threw himself heart and soul into their cause. Hooper's nature was hot and enthusiastic; and, regarding the Roman Church, and all that appertained to her, as an invention of Satan, he adopted the fantastic notions of Calvin, without imbibing any of the soberness and charity of the Swiss reformer. It is to be regretted that, in order to satisfy his own private fancy, Hooper was now willing to sacrifice the peace and concord of his Church.

In these days you are generally accustomed to see our clergy, during service, habited in plain white surplices; but, as I have before remarked in passing, in former days the robes of the clergy were different from what they are now. The bishops and priests, as they ministered at God's altar, were arrayed in vestments of bright and gorgeous colours. These rich vestments added in no small degree to the dignity of the service. They had been used in the Christian Church from the earliest ages; and therefore, when Cranmer and his associates compiled the first prayer-book, they wisely retained these ancient robes, for the people were accustomed to them, and they were closely associated in their minds with the most solemn and awful portion of their Church's service. They would as soon have thought of destroying the rich paintings in their cathedral windows, or the adornment of the altar, as of condemning a practice which their pious forefathers had retained, and which God Himself sanctioned when He commanded Moses "to make holy garments for Aaron for glory and for beauty."*

Hooper, however, was pleased to consider the "Aaronic habits," as he termed them, corrupt remnants of popery, although they had always belonged to the English as well as to the Roman Church, and were no more peculiar to Romanism than the Lord's Prayer or the Creeds. On the day of his consecration, Hooper steadily refused to wear the scarlet "rochet," or silk robe, which it was then customary for the bishop to wear. Now, had this zealous reformer been struggling for any *vital* doctrine of the faith, we must have admired his steadfastness; but as he was willing to disturb the quiet of the Church

* Exodus xxviii. 3.

for a matter of such comparatively small moment, his conduct must be regarded as foolish and unwise. All parties in the Church appear to have been opposed to Hooper. Archbishop Cranmer altogether refused to consecrate him unless he would consent to obey the law. Even the Calvinist party recommended the Bishop-elect to show his charity on this point. Peter Martyr, after urging Hooper to conform to the usages of the Church, concludes with the following words, which are worthy of our deep attention, when we consider from whom they come: "By condemning," he says, "these indifferent things as altogether unlawful, we shall draw down discredit upon unexceptionable communions, and condemn the practice of the most celebrated antiquity." Bucer's words also are well worthy of attention: "As to religious rites and externals," he says, "the design of them is to recommend the service of God Almighty, and those only are to be censured who make them part of the vitals of religion, and prefer them to the Divine commands. Now we know distinctness and richness of habit in civil offices are a service to the character. An imposing appearance in these cases operates upon the people, strikes their mind through their senses, and awakens a regard for the magistracy. Now what," he concludes, "should hinder its having the same effect upon religion?"*

In vain did the peace-loving Primate argue the point with the obdurate Bishop; in vain did the learned and moderate Ridley strive to induce him to yield. Hooper remained firm, and his conduct on the occasion encouraged the Calvinist party to express their opinions more boldly, and led, as we shall see, to some further changes in our Book of Common Prayer. Although Cranmer hoped, by some concessions, to win over Hooper and his supporters, he wisely determined that the stately and primitive Liturgy, which had received the approval of the English Church, should not be entirely altered and remodelled to suit the barren taste of these men. The Calvinists would fain have abolished all that was primitive in Christian worship—such ceremonies and godly customs which the Church had held sacred from the time of the Apostles, and which had received the sanction of the best and wisest Christians in all ages. They desired to strip the services of the Church of all outward, nay, even decent ceremonial. The soul-stirring strains of the organ, the hearty burst of joyful praise, the dignified procession of priests and choristers, the reverent celebration of the Holy *Eucharist*, were all condemned as remnants of popery. These *zealous* though misguided men forgot that the Christian Church

* Bucer.

in her earliest and purest days had set her seal to such customs and ceremonies; but they preferred setting up their own private opinions to the host of witnesses that had gone before.

Cranmer and the rest of the bishops were reluctant to listen to the suggestions of the Calvinists; but the young King, who was naturally of an enthusiastic temperament, admired the zeal and fervour of these reformers, and, overlooking their extravagances, determined to support them in their proposed revision of the Prayer Book. A flash of his father's tyrannical spirit burst forth on this occasion: "If I cannot," he said, "prevail on the bishops to accede to my wishes, I will assuredly cause the service book to be altered on my own authority." Consequently, in the year 1552, the Prayer Book, in a revised form, was put forth. Happily, the bishops laboured so earnestly to prevent any changes which could endanger the scriptural and Catholic spirit of the book, that although in some respects the ancient model was departed from, it remained for the most part much the same as before. One of the most important changes made at this revision, and which all must own was a gain, was the addition of the sentences of Scripture, the Exhortation, the Confession, and the Absolution, at the opening of the service. But while these beautiful portions of the service were added, the office for Holy Communion was altered for the worse, the sign of the cross and some other ancient forms were omitted, while the rich vestments of the clergy, which had given such offence to the zealous Hooper, were most of them done away with, and the plain surplice only was ordered to be used. In the hopes that peace and concord might be restored, our reformers were induced, at this second revision of the Prayer Book, to make this compromise.*

Cranmer, always ready to conciliate rather than repel those

* Without arguing in favour of the universal adoption of vestments now, it is remarkable that in the last revision of our Prayer Book, in the year 1662, when it was brought as near as possible to its present form, these vestments were ordered to be worn by the clergy, as formerly. If you will refer to the short "introduction" before the Order for Morning Prayer, you will read these words: "And here it is to be noticed, that such ornaments of the Church, *and the ministers thereof*, shall be retained, and be in use, as were in this Church of England, by the authority of parliament, *in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI.*" On referring to our history, we find that the year 1549 was the second year of Edward VI., the year that the first reformed service book was put forth; which, as you know, sanctioned the continued use of ecclesiastical vestments. It is probable, therefore, that the laxity and indifference of past ages was the chief cause why these clerical vestments were abandoned in many parochial churches, *as, according to this rubric*, it seems to have been the intention of our reformed church that they should be retained.

who differed, consented to give up these points, which he considered not absolutely necessary; but when further concessions were required of him, he manfully stood on the defensive, and determined to retain at all hazards what he knew to be true and right.

To show you how unreasonable were many of the scruples of these foreign reformers, I would mention that among other objections they protested against the reverent custom of kneeling at Holy Communion, believing it to be a remnant of the old Romish superstition. Cranmer earnestly raised his voice against this folly. A short sentence from the letter which he addressed to the Lords of the Council on this subject will interest you, as giving us the real mind of our leading reformer on these points. It appears that Edward desired that the scruples of the Protestants on the subject of kneeling might be duly considered before the revised Prayer Book was brought out. "I will," says Cranmer, "accomplish the King's mind in this respect. Albeit, I trust that we, with just balance, weighed this at the making of the book, and not only we, but a great many bishops and others of the best learned within this realm, appointed for that purpose. I know your lordships' wisdom to be such that I trust ye will not be moved with these glorious and unquiet spirits, who can like nothing but that is after their own fancy, and cease not to make trouble when things be most quiet and in good order. If such men should be heard, although the book were made every year anew, yet it should not lack faults in their opinion. But, say they, it is not commanded in the Scripture to kneel; and whatsoever is not commanded in the Scripture is against the Scripture, and utterly unlawful and ungodly. But this saying is the chief foundation of the anabaptists and other sects. This saying is subversive of all order in religion, as in common policy. If this saying be true, take away the whole book of service, for what should men *travail** to set in order in the form of service, if no order can be got but that is already prescribed by Scripture? I will not trouble your lordships," he concludes, "with reciting many Scriptures as proof of this matter; but whosoever teacheth any such doctrine, I will set my foot in his to be tried by fire that his doctrine is untrue; but not only untrue, but also seditious and perilous to be heard of any subject, as a thing breaking their bridle of obedience and loosing from the bond of all princes' laws."

Had Edward VI. lived, it is difficult to say how far these alterations in the ancient Service Book might have been carried;

* Labour.

but it pleased God in the following year to cut short his life; so that it is very doubtful whether the second Prayer Book of Edward VI., as it is called, was ever taken into common use. It formed the basis of some further revisions, which were made afterwards; but in the last revision of 1662, the bishops of our church, finding that concession failed to satisfy the Calvinist party, restored again certain things which had been relinquished in this second Prayer Book, so that our present Book of Common Prayer in many particulars very nearly resembles the first admirable Service Book put forth in the second year of Edward VI.

During the last year of Edward's reign, Archbishop Cranmer, aided by the other bishops, drew up forty-two Articles for the benefit of the Church. These Articles, with the exception of some few alterations, made afterwards in Queen Elizabeth's reign, are in all essential points the same as the Thirty-nine Articles which we have now. At the time of the Reformation, and indeed ever since, there has been so much diversity of opinion among Christians, that a distinct statement of religious truth, such as may be found in these Articles, was required to bind together in unity the members of the English Church. People had for centuries been so accustomed to believe in the errors which from time to time had crept into the Church, that it was deemed necessary to put forth these Articles, which should state in an authoritative manner what that primitive faith was from which men had departed, while at the same time they condemned the false teaching which had become so common. Our Thirty-nine Articles, therefore, are rules, or standards of religious faith, put forth for, as it was declared, "the avoiding of diversities of opinion, and for establishing of consent touching true religion."

I have dwelt thus long upon the history of our Prayer Book, because I consider it a subject of deep importance, and one which cannot fail to interest all true English Churchmen. The formation of our Book of Common Prayer is the grand event of the reign of Edward VI. Minor events cluster round it; but these I have left you to study in your English history. I must not, however, close this chapter without saying a few words on the character of Edward VI.

He displayed from his earliest boyhood an innate love for religion; and, as I have shown you, the peculiar tone of his mind led him to admire and imitate the enthusiasm of the less moderate reformers. Their preaching and doctrine had far *greater charms* for him than the teaching of the more stanch churchmen, who would fain have retained things which he

regarded as remnants of the old superstition. Yet, though we may not altogether agree with Edward in this respect, we must admire his simple faith and earnest piety. Fuller relates two interesting anecdotes of this young prince, of the truth of which I think there can be little doubt, as in all probability they were related to him by eye-witnesses. When yet a mere child, Edward learned to love and reverence God's Holy Word. "One day," writes Fuller, "being about to take down something which was above his reach, one of his playfellows offered him a boss-plated Bible to stand upon and heighten him to take what was desired. Perceiving it a Bible, with holy indignation he refused it, and sharply reproved the offerer thereof; it being unfit that he should trample that under his feet which he was to treasure up in his head and heart. When crowned King," continues Fuller, "his goodness increased with his greatness. Constant in his private devotions, he was as successful as fervent therein. One instance will suffice. Sir John Cheke, his school-master, fell desperately ill, of whose condition the King carefully inquired every day. At last his physician told him there was no hope of his life, being given over by them for a dead man. No, said King Edward; he will not die at this time, for this morning I begged his life of God in my prayers, and obtained it. The words of Holy Writ, which declare that 'the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up,' were remarkably verified in this instance."* The young King's petition was heard, and, to the astonishment of all, the sick man recovered.

Were any wanted to convince us of Edward's real piety, I need only quote the simple and beautiful prayer he uttered on his deathbed: "Lord God, deliver me out of this miserable and wretched life, and take me among thy chosen. Howbeit, not my will, but Thine be done. Lord, I commit my spirit to Thee; O Lord, thou knowest how happy it were for me to be with Thee; yet for thy chosen's sake send me life, that I may truly serve Thee. O my Lord God, bless Thy people, and save Thine inheritance. O Lord God, save thy chosen people of England. O my Lord God, defend this realm from Papistry, and maintain Thy true religion, that I and my people may praise Thy Holy Name, for Jesus Christ's sake."†

And now that I have brought you up to this period of our Church's history my task is accomplished. Much anxious thought has been bestowed on these pages; but all will be fully compensated for, if I have succeeded in impressing firmly on your minds this one important fact: that the Church of England

* James v. 15.

† Fuller, vol xi., p. 359.

now, of which you have all by baptism been made members, is the same Church which in early British times was planted on our island by the Apostles, or their immediate successors, and which was further extended and strengthened when St. Augustine landed with his handful of monks, and raised the Church's ensign among the heathen Saxons. Our English Church, therefore, ever has been and still is a branch of that "One Catholic and Apostolic Church" which our Blessed Lord himself founded, and with which He solemnly promised to abide, "even to the end of the world."

The Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, in forcible words reminds us of our blessings as members of Christ's household. "Now, therefore," he exclaims, after having shown how our blessed Lord has brought us near to Him, "ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."*

May we ever remain faithful members of this divinely-appointed Church, remembering that she retains not only prayers and ceremonies which are primitive and godly, but that she is also the faithful keeper and preserver of Holy Writ.

* Ephesians ii. 19-22.

THE END.





